

SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY
MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 623.

FOR WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 8TH, 1900.

[ONE PENNY.]

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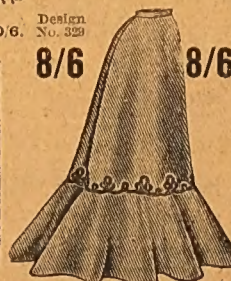
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No. 623.]

[ONE PENNY.]

For the Week Ending December 8th, 1900.

RUINED BY RICHES.

the necessary outfit, and proceeded up country in his quest for the diamonds which had in imagination dazzled his view.

It is not necessary to the purpose of this story to describe the various adventures which befell him in the next two years. Suffice it to say that things steadily went from bad to worse with him, until his hopes completely died out, and his only wish was to get back to the coast with a view to working his passage home again. With this object he turned his back on the diggings and commenced his lonely journey.

For several days he wandered on, but the unaccustomed hardships and privations had told upon him and finally, utterly weary and dispirited he sank down by the wayside.

Had, not a good Samaritan passed that way in the person of an old Dutch farmer, Carl Jansen by name, this would probably have been the end of Julian Castleman.

When the old farmer came upon him, Castleman was raving in delirium. Carl Jansen's farm lay a few miles ahead, and in obedience to the promptings of his kindly nature Carl lifted the fever-stricken stranger into his waggon and conveyed him to his home. There the farmer's wife and daughter took charge of him and nursed him back to health and strength.

Some weeks had elapsed since Julian Castleman had entered those hospitable doors and he was now beginning to think of taking his departure. He and his host sat by the homely fireside, puffing at their pipes.

"What do you intend doing now?" asked the farmer.

"Oh! I shall resume my journey and get home as quickly as I can, though it goes very much against the grain to return home to admit myself beaten."

"Then why go at all. I can do with a strong arm like yours on the farm, and if you care to stay I can offer you a comfortable home and a fair wage. Come now make up your mind to stay with us."

Julian thought over the offer and finally decided to accept it. During his illness a warmer feeling than

JULIAN CASTLEMAN was the only son of a younger son. There was a title and wealth enough in the family, but as there were three lives between him and that title, he considered it of no account. He had therefore gathered all that he had together and was on the eve of his departure to a far country, viz., South Africa.

Before embarking on his journey he made a "duty call" upon his uncle, the present holder of the family title, Lord Clifton, and it is there we find him taking leave of his lordship.

"And so you hope to make a fortune out in South Africa, Julian?"

"Yes! it certainly seems an easier matter to amass wealth there than in England. The homeland is the place to live in when your fortune is made and you have nothing to do but spend it. In the diamond fields of South Africa a man may make more in a year than he could in a life-time here, and so I am off to try my luck."

"Well, my boy, far be it from me to throw cold water on your hopes, but I cannot help thinking of the many who in digging for diamonds have only dug the grave of their own hopes, and finally have themselves been buried in the same grave."

Julian laughed at his uncle's gloomy picture. He had all the sanguineness of youth and health, and, in addition, he was not afraid of hard work, provided there was some prospect of his labour being rewarded.

A few days after this interview, Castleman stepped on board ship at Southampton and was conveyed to the land of promise—but of scant fulfilment.

On arrival at Capetown he lost no time in procuring

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When the old farmer came upon him Castleman was raving in delirium.

gratitude towards his host's daughter had taken possession of him.

Anna Jansen was a plump, rosy, vivacious specimen of budding womanhood, and there had been just sufficient romance in the meeting of the two young people to excite more than a passing interest. In fact, it was the old story over again. The nurse and the patient had fallen in love.

Turning to his host, Castleman told him of his decision and also of his affection for Anna.

"Well," said the old man, "if in course of a year or two—for the girl is but young—you are in the same mind, and are satisfied with your life here, I shall have no objection to giving my little girl to you."

Thus Julian Castleman became a modern Jacob with Anna Jansen for his Rachel. Not seven years, however, did he wait. Only two and a half years had elapsed since he became an inmate of that home when she became his wife.

Six months had elapsed since that event, when something occurred that changed the whole current of Julian Castleman's life. He had gone down to Capetown to transact some business there. While idling about in a hotel, he chanced to pick up an old English newspaper. As he carelessly turned it over, the following paragraph caught his eye:

Some strange fatality seems to pursue the representatives of the Clifton family. As our readers will remember, some months ago, the eldest son of Lord Clifton met with a fatal accident in the hunting field. Only a few weeks had elapsed when news reached England of the death of the youngest son, who had been

mountaineering in Switzerland, and had fallen a victim to his own daring and love of adventure. The loss of his two sons in such rapid succession, proved too heavy a blow for Lord Clifton, and in a short time his remains were placed in the family vault, and the title descended to the only surviving son. Not long, however, has he been permitted to hold it. Shortly after his accession to the title his lordship started for a cruise in the Mediterranean. Fate still seems to pursue the family, however, as from advices just to hand, it appears that while out rowing, by some means the boat was capsized and the new Lord Clifton and one of the crew were drowned. We understand that the body has been recovered, and will be brought to England for interment. The heir to the title and estates is, we are informed, the only son of the elder Lord Clifton's brother and cousin of the last holder of the title. This gentleman left England some years ago and has not since been heard of, but we suppose every effort will be made to trace his whereabouts.

Julian Castleman's feelings on reading this were indescribable. He, from whom the title had seemed so far removed, was now Lord Clifton.

"I must go to England at once and prove my claim," he thought, and here he stopped as the thought of his wife flashed across his mind.

He rapidly reviewed the situation, and his resolve was soon taken. He had never told his wife of his aristocratic connections. Not that he had any motive for concealment, but simply because he had not considered it worth mentioning.

"To take Anna to England to mix with English society is impossible," he said to himself. "Why, I should be an object of commiseration and she a laughing stock."

"If you cannot take your wife to England, then stay in Africa yourself," prompted his better nature.

"What! Give up all which I left England to gain, and which has now fallen into my grasp so unexpectedly. It is too much to be expected."

Thus arguing the matter with himself, Julian Castleman allowed the devil to gain complete ascendancy over him. He decided to cut himself adrift from the old life completely, and in pursuance of this resolution, he made his way to the steamship office, where he ascertained there was a boat leaving for England on the following day.

Accordingly, as he had sufficient means with him, he booked his passage, and the next day he left the shores of Africa—left his young wife, left his benefactor—and sailed for England.

As the days sped by and he did not return, Carl Jansen became uneasy, and eventually journeyed to Capetown to make inquiries, but his efforts met with no success.

As the days lengthened into weeks and the weeks into months, the conviction forced itself upon Carl Jansen that Julian Castleman had deserted his young wife, and he swore a bitter oath of vengeance should they ever again meet.

The young wife was loth to believe her husband could be so base and still hoped on, but the uncertainty and anxiety undermined her strength until she became a mere wreck of her former self.

* * * * *

"We heartily congratulate your lordship, and trust you will be long spared to enjoy your wealth."

Thus spoke the family solicitors when Julian Castleman had proved his claim to the title and estates.

Lord Clifton, for such we must now call him, had landed in England about a fortnight ago, and had at once proceeded to the office of Messrs. Steel and Sharp, the family solicitors, where we now find him.

"Perhaps your lordship will do us the honour of dining with us this evening," said the senior-partner,

when the business was concluded. "We shall have one or two friends to meet you, but it will only be a quiet party."

Lord Clifton readily accepted the invitation. He spent the intervening period in looking up some of his old friends at the club where they had been in the habit of congregating, returning to his host's in time for dinner.

Among the guests that evening were Sir Wilfred Armitage and his daughter Evelyn. The worthy baronet had made his money in trade and having amassed a considerable fortune had retired, and his chief ambition now was to become allied to a title.

There was a tendency in certain circles to keep the remembrance of his trading days dangling before his eyes and he thought that if he could only marry his daughter to one of the nobility possibly he might suffer less from this cause.

Consequently he was most attentive to Lord Clifton, concerning whom he had been posted by their host.

As the gentlemen sat over their wine before joining the ladies after dinner, Sir Wilfred engaged Lord Clifton in conversation.

"I suppose your lordship intends to settle in England now, or are you going to become one of those truant landlords, who leave their affairs in the hands of agents while they roam the earth?"

"Yes! I have been an absentee from my native shores long enough to appreciate the opportunity of settling at home."

"We must get you interested in local affairs. For instance, now, there is a dearth of officers in our volunteer corps. You might join that. I am a member and shall be glad to introduce you to my brother officers as a prospective colleague."

"I shall be delighted to meet the officers of your corps, but I am not sure about becoming an officer myself."

"Well then, as I am entertaining them at dinner to-morrow I shall be glad if you will join us, and we will endeavour to arouse your patriotic feelings."

Lord Clifton assented and the conversation ended. On the following evening he adjourned to Templemore, the residence of the worthy baronet and there met the officers. He also renewed his acquaintance with Evelyn Armitage, whose fresh young beauty had attracted him on the previous evening. She also had been attracted.

Lord Clifton was a fair specimen of English manhood. He had a well-knit athletic frame and a handsome face. Moreover he was perfect in all matters of courtesy and gentlemanliness, not withstanding his rough life on the veld.

The upshot of that dinner party was that Lord Clifton became an officer of the corps, and as a brother officer a frequent visitor at Templemore, until it became whispered among observers that Evelyn Armitage was destined to become Lady Clifton.

In the early days of their acquaintance the face of his deserted bride often rose before Lord Clifton's eyes, but as time wore on the image became dimmed and

he began to give some consideration to the idea of marrying the baronet's daughter.

Had he been free he would have proposed ere this, but his conscience had not been effectually silenced.

After much thought he decided to take the plunge. It appeared most improbable that the history of those early days would ever become known, consequently he proposed to, and was accepted by Evelyn Armitage.

In a few months the baronet bestowed her upon Lord Clifton with his paternal blessing and much self-congratulation.

At the time of this marriage, however, the real Lady Clifton lay dying in her South African home, as was subsequently ascertained.

No shadow had as yet fallen across the path of the young couple. Evelyn idolised her husband, and would sometimes say as she leant fondly against him:

"Julian, dear, if ever anything should come between us I should want to die."

At these times he would inwardly shudder and hope that the ghost of the past would never rise.

It was about this time that the storm broke in South Africa, and we were hurrying troops out to the seat of war.

Ere long the call came for England's citizen soldiers to take up arms for their country.

Lord Clifton strolled into his club one evening and there found several of his brother officers discussing the news.

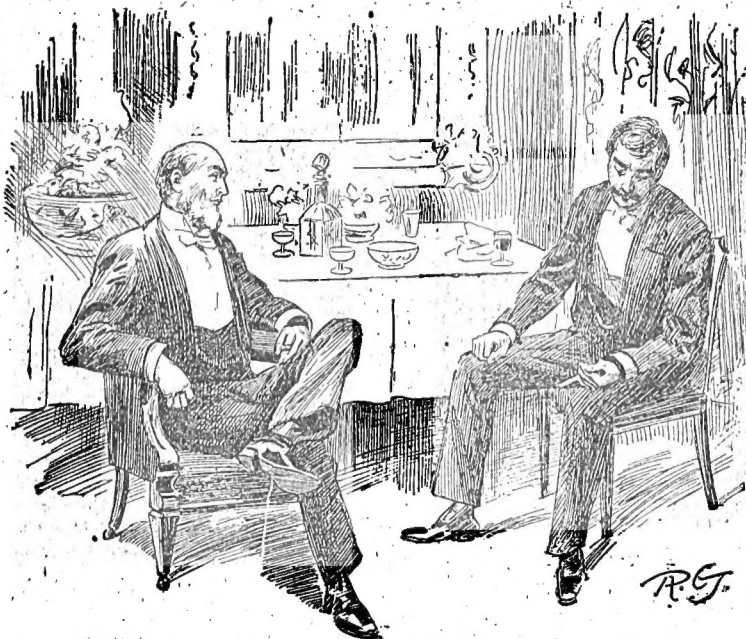
"Hello! Clifton, have you heard the news?" asked one of the group.

"What news do you mean?"

"Why, that the much sneered at volunteer, the Saturday night soldier, is going to have his chance. Now we'll show them what kind of stuff we are made of. Of course, you will offer to lead your company?"

Lord Clifton paused a moment.

Dare he go out to South Africa again? No, he could not go there, the risks were too great. The sight of that



After dinner Sir Wilfred engaged Lord Clifton in conversation.

wronged father's face would unnerve him and strike his arm powerless by his side.

"Come, Clifton, surely you are not hesitating. Your men will look to you to lead them."

"I am very sorry, but it will be impossible for me to leave England."

General astonishment was depicted on the faces of all present and he was pressed for his reasons.

Clifton endeavoured to laugh them off, but as they were persistent in their inquiries, he at last burst out impatiently.

"Oh, hang it all, You fellows are worse than the Hebrews. By their laws a man was not expected to go to war within a year of his marriage, and here you fellows want to bundle me off in less than half the time," and with this he left the room.

Shortly after his departure, Sir Wilfred Armitage came in and was immediately tackled by some of the more boisterous spirits.

"Here, Sir Wilfred, you had better go home and

lecture your daughter on her duty. She has actually turned Clifton into a stay-at-home and a coward."

"What do you mean?" warmly answered the baronet.

"Why, your noble son-in-law intends to stay at home when there is a glorious chance of leading his men to victory in South Africa. Go and tell Lady Clifton his country claims his services."

"What! Do you mean to tell me Clifton is not going out?"

"Certainly. He has just left us, pleading the recency of his marriage as his excuse for not volunteering for the front."

"Well, I'm off after him to get that decision altered," and so saying the baronet followed his son-in-law.

On arrival at The Towers, Sir Wilfred burst into the drawing-room where he found Lord Clifton and Evelyn.

"Here, Evelyn, what do you mean by keeping Clifton back when his country is asking for his services?"

"Father, what are you talking about?"

"Why, the fellows at the club are saying you have turned Clifton into a stay-at-home and a coward."

Turning to her husband, Lady Clifton said:

"What does all this mean, Julian?"

"Oh! I have refused to volunteer for service in South Africa, and those ill-mannered beggars at the club persist in saying that you have tied me to your side."

Evelyn flushed and paled alternately. It was evident that a mental struggle was going on. Eventually she said with an effort:

"Julian, dear, if your men are going none but you must

lead them. It shall not be said that I made a coward of my husband. I would rather have kept you by my side, but not under such conditions, so I shall send you from me and pray for your safe return."

Clifton protested at first, but eventually ended by offering his services which were accepted.

In due time orders were received and Lord Clifton proceeded to Southampton with his men. Lady Clifton accompanied her husband to the docks and there took leave of him.

The voyage was uneventful. On arrival at Capetown Lord Clifton and his men were drafted off at once to join the main body of Lord Roberts' army at Kroonstadt. How strangely Fate was leading him will appear in the subsequent narrative.

Just after the date on which Lord Clifton led Evelyn Armitage to the altar, the farmer's daughter died and Carl Jansen moved to a farm situated some ten miles from Kroonstadt.

He was a peaceful man, and though compelled to take

up arms in the earlier stages of the war, he had since given up his arms and returned to his farm. He had not that intense hatred of the "verdomde rooieks" which characterised some of his compatriots and only wished to end his days in peace.

Clifton and his men duly arrived at Kroonstadt where they were to remain for some time. Several days after their arrival, Lord Clifton and five men set out on a foraging expedition, and after a ride of two or three hours, calling at several farms on



The old farmer's revolver rang out.

the way, they came to a lonely farm from which the accepted token of submission—the white flag—was flying.

Turning to one of his men, Lord Clifton said:

"Robinson, ride forward to that farm and see if you can procure us some refreshment."

Riding off in the direction indicated, while the remainder of the party halted, Robinson came within hail, and in response to his call the farmer appeared. As he gazed he became strangely agitated, and before Robinson could speak the farmer addressed him.

"Who is the officer in charge of your party?"

"Captain Lord Clifton," replied the soldier.

At this the farmer seemed disappointed and listened while the soldier made known his errand.

He ordered one of his men to get what was required. Whilst they were waiting a thought seemed to strike the farmer.

"What was your officer's name before he got his title?" he asked.

"He was Mr. Julian Castleman before he became Lord Clifton," answered the soldier. "But you seem very curious, old man. What are you driving at?"

"Oh! I thought I had seen the officer before, but I must have been mistaken as I don't know that name," replied the farmer, and as the refreshments appeared at this moment the conversation ended.

As the soldier turned his horse to rejoin his comrades the farmer again spoke.

"Present my compliments to your officer and tell him I shall be honoured if he will come in and rest while his men refresh themselves," he said.

The soldier rode off and conveyed the message to Lord Clifton, which the officer readily accepted. Riding nearer he handed his horse to one of his men and was shown into an inner room by one of the hands, who informed him that his master would join him immediately.

The man had only recently been taken into Jansen's service and therefore knew nothing of what had transpired in those earlier days. Lord Clifton flung himself into a chair and divested himself of his arms with a view to making himself comfortable.

No sooner had he done this than he heard himself addressed by his old name and on looking up he found himself confronted by the man he had wronged.

Framed in the doorway the old Farmer coolly pointed a revolver in Clifton's face and warned him that any attempt to seize his arms would only precipitate his death. Unnerved and conscience-stricken Lord Clifton sat speechless.

Never taking his finger from the trigger Carl Jansen thus addressed the guilty wretch before him:

"And so, Julian Castleman, Lord Clifton. Fate has brought you back to me. You, who destroyed my peace and broke my girl's heart, have come here, unsuspectingly to your doom. When I buried my girl in the lonely grave on the veld I vowed that if ever you crossed my path again I would shoot you like a dog, and now my opportunity has come. I shall give you just two minutes and then I shall fire. No doubt your men will shoot me, but if I have sent your soul to account first I shall be satisfied."

Goaded to frenzy Clifton snatched for his pistol, but ere he could reach it, the old farmer's revolver rang out and the leaden messenger was buried in Clifton's heart. He sank lifeless on the floor, just as his men rushed in.

The farmer was immediately put under arrest and conveyed back to the camp. On arrival the men reported the incident and another case of Boer treachery was wired home to their respective papers by their correspondents.

The old man was tried and condemned to imprisonment, while efforts were made to hush the matter up.

The news of Lord Clifton's death, as recorded at the War Office and reported in the newspapers, came as a terrible shock to Lady Clifton, and for some weeks her life was despaired of.

"Why did I send him from me?" she moaned over and over again.

Eventually she began to regain strength and had just reached that stage of convalescence which permitted of her taking carriage exercise, when the final blow came with crushing force.

Lady Clifton, as we shall continue to call her, for who has more right to the title, the first wife being dead, was seated in a closed carriage which had been drawn up under the trees in the Park.

Leaning over the rails were two young officers recently invalidated home from South Africa.

"Oh! I say, Fitzgerald, what was that yarn in connection with the murder of Lord Clifton?" asked one of them.

"Well, it was generally reported as a case of Boer treachery—another case of the abuse of the white flag—but the real facts of the case placed Clifton in a very black light."

"What are the real facts then?" queried the other.

In response to this inquiry, Lient. Fitzgerald told the story as narrated by the old farmer at his trial. During this narration Lady Clifton had been listening to every word, her attention having been attracted by hearing Lord Clifton's name.

The words sank like hot iron into her very soul, yet she heard it all through. Then her over-wrought feelings gave way, and with one piercing shriek she fainted.

She was conveyed home with all speed and a physician summoned, but it was found that reason had forsaken her throne.

Thus two lives were sacrificed, one woman was driven to madness and the peace of several homes wrecked. In short, all these lives were ruined by riches.

J. H. PEAT.

£400 HAS NOW BEEN PAID.

The latest capture in connection with the Ten-Pound Note Scheme has been made by

Mr. George Wardle,
55 Laburnum Road, Fulwell,
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who captured No. 78 at a football match at Sunderland.

CHRISTMAS CARDS GIVEN AWAY.

The Editor of *Pearson's Weekly* has prepared a charming little Christmas Card, suitable for readers to send to their friends. The picture is a reproduction of a photograph, and contains a seasonable inscription.

A huge number of copies is being printed, and the first batch is now ready. In return for a postcard, giving your name and address, sent to the Christmas Card Department, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., we will post you a few cards free of all cost. Applications will be dealt with in rotation. The Christmas Card is quite charming, and is in no way an aggressive advertisement of *Pearson's Weekly* or the Ten-Pound Scheme.

The Sketch

"HAVE YOU GOT THAT £10 NOTE?"

suitable for two gentlemen and one lady, has now been put into type, and is to be obtained in book form, at sixpence per copy, from Messrs. Samuel French Limited, Theatrical Publishers, 89 Strand, London, W.C.

**NO FEE WILL BE CHARGED AMATEURS
FOR PLAYING IT.**

The scene is one that can easily be arranged, and the costumes are quite ordinary ones.

THE FINDING OF LEO PHAYRE.

ULTIMA DREW was visibly perplexed, not vitally so, but quite sufficiently to insure momentary vexation at any rate.

As a rule she was a stay-at-home sort of young person, rather, however, from force of circumstances than as a matter of inclination.

Quick-witted, full of life and energy, she could be content anywhere, but the larger the field the greater her happiness and sense of personal enjoyment.

Living as she did a comparatively retired life with a widowed aunt in a quiet western suburb, her surroundings at mid-day, on a certain summer's morning about four years ago, were calculated to bewilder her a little. Fenchurch Street at that hour is trying to most people save and except your born "City Man."

Ultima's mission on this occasion was to find a particular Shipping Office, and there to make inquiries concerning one Ephraim Hoyt, the only son of her aunt, Prudence Hoyt, whose ship, upon which he served as third-officer, was long overdue.

Up and down the crowded thoroughfare toiled Ultima. Numbers seemed to dance before her eyes, while the legion of names upon the door-posts and window blinds fairly mixed themselves up for her into one kaleidoscopic whole.

Into a dark building well down towards Aldgate, she ventured at last, seeing within a long list of tenants.

"Beg pardon, miss, are you looking for anything or anybody? Perhaps I can help you?"

Ultima turned sharply round to see a tall, thin, grizzled man of middle age, unmistakably a seaman.

"No thanks! I shall soon find what I want. Ah! here it is! Kirby, Danes and Co., Second Floor."

"That's odd!" said the man again. "Why, they're my owners! I'm going up there now. 'Scuse me, but my name's Lobb, Captain Lobb, of the barque *Pearl*, at your service."

Although Ultima did not by any means appreciate the appearance and manners of the captain, still his connection with the owners of the *Cairngorm*, her cousin Fred's ship, tended somewhat to disarm prejudice.

Her business concluded, and, curiously co-incidental, the captain's also, Ultima started homeward.

It appeared that he was also bound for Notting Hill (not exactly a co-incidental, for he had glanced at her return half-ticket, dropped by her and restored by him) and, in spite of Ultima's badly-disguised disapproval, he accompanied her to Cannon Street Station.

"May as well see you safe, as I'm going your way, Miss—"

Here the girl diplomatically made a half-slip, as if by accident, so cleverly evading giving the desired information.

In the train the Captain was discursive on the subject of his travels, until, Notting Hill reached, Ultima discovered to both her alarm and annoyance that her ankle was really sprained. She could scarcely put her

foot to the ground. This of course necessitated the assistance of the gallant skipper in the ascent of the station stairs and a subsequent putting her into a cab.

"Hullo! Phayre! What are you doing in this part of the world?"

This to a young fellow in nautical attire, swinging round to enter the station.

"Just looking round a bit," answered the other, "ship's all right: I've left the bos'n in charge."

Leo Phayre, first officer of the *Pearl* could not help looking with some amusement at the Captain and Ultima.

Lobb's ways were not, according to Leo's experience, the ways likely to suit the average young lady.

But then he remembered that young ladies now-a-days are given oftentimes to strange methods and fancies.

"My chief officer, Leo Phayre,—Miss—"

"Drew," said Ultima, though not so reluctantly, as she was prompted to do earlier in the Captain's case.

Quite of the Norse type both in build and feature, the fair-haired, stalwart young sailor irresistibly attracted Ultima.

He looked honest too, and true, a direct contrast, the girl thought, to her self-constituted escort.

"'Scuse me, Phayre, but Miss Drew has hurt her foot, and must get home at once!" (she had been sitting in the cab all this time) "see you on the *Pearl* in the morning."

There was nothing for it but for him to accept his dismissal, and the big sailor dived down into the "underground," full of the sweet vision vouchsafed him a moment before on the earth above.

Thus began the dramatic episode in three lives, although that the main issue and situation may be made quite clear and understandable, it is necessary that a very brief account should be given of these same three persons' actions during the six weeks immediately following David Lobb's self-introduction to Ultima Drew.

During the next few weeks, then, Captain Lobb contrived, on the pretext of sympathetic inquiry, to make many a call at the little Bayswater house.

Ultima disliked him, and I am afraid scare concealed her real feelings, but the captain was of the pachydermatous sort, and took no notice.

It may have been three weeks after the incident of the sprained ankle (which after all had turned out to be anything but serious) that, walking one day in the Bayswater Road, Ultima met Leo Phayre face to face.

A few words of courteous interchange; half-an-hour's stroll between Kensington Palace and the Marble Arch and the thing was done for all time.

The captain soon discovered the state of affairs, more than once finding his Chief Officer in Anger Place before him. He soon saw, however, that in competition with his younger rival he had no chance whatsoever for Ultima's favour.

Bound to one another a fortnight before the sailing of the *Pearl* for the South Seas, Ultima yielded to Leo's earnest petition for a hasty marriage two days prior to that event.

He wanted, he said, to be sure of her, not, as he hastened to explain to her, because he in any way doubted her faith and fealty, but just because of an indefinite, perhaps a foolish feeling of coming insecurity and danger. She could remain with her aunt until the *Pearl* came home again.

Married, therefore, they were, and the ship sailed away to the "Golden" Pacific, leaving behind her a girl-wife, who would wait, Penelope-wise, the return of her Ulysses.

* * * * *

Ten months afterwards the barque *Pearl*, David Lobb, master, arrived in the London docks. Her Captain reported to his owners the death, off one of the smaller islands of the South Sea group, of his Chief Officer, Leo Phayre, from fever.

On the evening of the same day Captain Lobb sought an interview with Ultima, and then communicated to her the news of her husband's death.

Strange to say she did not cry or "take on," as a certain type of women do, or as in fact most women would have done under the circumstances.

Had you asked her she would have said that she did not believe it, that nothing would induce her to believe it except the sight of her dead husband's face. As this was manifestly impossible she appeared, callously so, her aunt and the Captain thought, indifferent, calm and self-possessed.

"Darned odd!" said Lobb to himself as he left the house. "It's downright unnatural!"

The *Pearl*, owing to being laid up for overhauling and repairs, remained in port for nearly five months.

During the whole of the time Captain Lobb was not idle. His persistent endeavours to ingratiate himself with Ultima, appeared at first to be absolutely unsuccessful. For weeks she would have nothing to say to him. She denied herself to him when he called, pleaded illness, and adopted any and every ruse in order to avoid his presence.

Mrs. Hoyt expostulated but vainly with her niece, she having a rather better opinion of David Lobb than had Ultima Phayre.

Suddenly, and without any warning the domestic wind changed, so far, at least as Ultima was concerned.

To outsiders there was no apparent reason for this, but it may be stated that it was undoubtedly due to the receipt by Ultima of a certain letter signed Peter Rollinson, boatswain of the *Pearl*.

The letter was to this effect:

HONO. MADAM,—

Don't trust our skipper. He's a villain. Mister Fare's not dead. He never was. Cap'n Lobb and me (he made me do it) carried him in the dingy to an island a few miles to the southward of Tahiti, South Seas. If he's alive, which I think he could keep himself on roots and such-like, he's there now. Please keep this to yourself, ma'am. he's treated me shameful, and I'm telling you so as you can do something.

A letter sent to P. Rollinson, at the "Prince Arthur," St. Georges Road, E. will find me, and I'll tell you more.

Ultima, when she had read the letter, just smiled to herself, and went upstairs to her room.

Upon the Captain's next visit she was friendly to a degree. Some men, over-shrewd and keen-sighted, might have had their suspicions as to the sincerity of the lady's

manner; but Lobb was, in spite of his years, very much in love, and, in consequence, blind to everything save his determination to make Ultima Mrs. Lobb.

If her aunt was mildly vexed before, she was angry now at Ultima's barefaced, (so she called it) encouragement of the Captain, and when, four months after the *Pearl's* homecoming the girl announced to her horrified relative her engagement to its enterprising commander, there was no more strength left in her.

"Ultima!" she said, trying to speak as indignantly as her affection would allow her, "I've done with you—quite done with you. You must do as you please; but mark my words that a marriage with this man before poor Leo is cold in his grave is not even decent, and will lead to sorrow for you and perhaps worse."

"Auntie! don't be angry!" replied Ultima seeking to stroke her aunt's hand. "Some day you'll understand and acknowledge that I'm right in what I'm doing."

"Never!—my dear!—never!" said the old lady emphatically, "right can never come out of wrong, and that this is wrong I am more than persuaded I am sure."

Shortly then, when the Captain pressed for an early wedding-day he was told that it would be granted only on three conditions. First that the ceremony should take place the morning of the day of sailing; secondly, that she, Ultima, should accompany the ship as a passenger, occupying her own cabin, with her aunt as companion; and lastly, that this latter arrangement should continue until so long as Tahiti, the destination of the *Pearl*, should be reached.

He was obliged to consent, although unwillingly, knowing as he did by this time something of Ultima's strength of will and temper.

And so for the second time in her life, did a young girl upon the eve of the same vessel's sailing for the same sea, take upon herself grave responsibilities which, as compared with those of the first occasion, were strangely terrible in their significance.

* * * * *

The barque *Pearl* was steadily forging ahead before a ten-knot breeze, and every evidence existed of a speedy and favourable termination to her voyage.

She had entered now into the wonderful region, known generically as the South Seas.

Ultima, ever since the departure from England, had rigidly kept her cabin, poring over and studying intently the various charts and maps. Did she take a breath or two of fresh air, it was during Lobb's "watch below" (for he took watch about with his new mate) and in company with Aunt Prudence.

Rollinson, the boatswain, made no signs as to his acquaintance with her, up to the day, that is to say, the events of which, and the night that followed, are now to be related.

For the first time Ultima had spoken to Lobb as he descended the companion from the poop to enter the saloon.

She asked him, in a matter-of-fact way, the probable date of arrival at Tahiti, and on receiving his reply that it would probably be some time during the afternoon of the following day, she said no more but retired to her cabin.

"Ah! my lady!" he said half-aloud as she disappeared, "when I do have you all to myself, you shall pay for this, take it from me!"

He felt instinctively that she was concealing something from him; that there was game afoot, but as to the meaning or the manner of it he was completely in the dark.

More study of one particular chart, and then somewhere about the end of the second "dog-watch" she took out of a chest a man's reefer jacket and donned it. Next, she put a small revolver in one of the side pockets, and, leaning over to assure herself that her aunt was asleep she sat down and waited.

"Two bells! Three bells!"

Quietly she opened the cabin door, and crept up the companion. It was quite dark, but she could see the "mate" lying fast asleep upon a hencoop to windward of the poop.

Passing him with a curious smile, she made her way to the wheel.

The oil-skin-clad figure there whispered her as she touched his arm. It was the boatswain.

"Ay!—ay! missie—it's all right," jerking his thumb over towards the sleeping, stertorously-breathing "chief."

"It was a big dose; but it won't hurt him."

"Peter! alter the course to west and by south, and keep it at that until I come up again in an hour."

"Ay! ay! missie."

Ultima glided back along the poop deck to the companion, and so down to her cabin.

In an hour's time she came up again.

"Give me the wheel," she said, "you go forward and see the carpenter, and find out if he has done as you and he agreed with regard to the men."

The boatswain put the spokes into her hand and hastened forward.

Soon he returned, announcing that all was well.

She would not give up the wheel to him, but handing him the revolver, she bid him quietly stand by her, and keep a good look out.

"Seven bells" sounded, and simultaneously with their striking, Rollinson, who had, ten minutes before, gone "forrad" again, came hurriedly to Ultima's side.

"There's land ahead!" he said, excitedly, "off the starboard bow, and about ten miles I'm thinking."

"Well, I'll give you the wheel directly," she answered quite calmly, though could one have read her heart, there would certainly have been seen an agitation almost beyond bearing.

"My Leo! My Leo!" she kept singing to herself, and the song was as of heaven to her.

It was then that a movement in the saloon beneath was discernible, and before the two on the poop deck could realise the situation, Lobb's head and shoulders appeared coming up the port-companion.

At a glance he saw that the course had been changed.

"Hi! You!" he roared, making a rush for the wheel. "Who told you to alter the course?—Who is it at the wheel?—By Heavens! it's a woman!"

He would have torn the spokes out of Ultima's hand, had not the boatswain thrown himself between her and the captain.

Gripping the latter by the throat, he tried all he knew to throw him, and at last by a dexterous Cornish wrestling trick brought him heavily to the deck on his back.

It was but the work of a moment to make fast the prostrate captain's hands and ankles, with a coil of the signal half-yards.

"Give me the wheel now," cried Rollinson to Ultima. "And you, missie, you run to Chips, and tell him I want him—want him directly."

They were now within easy distance of the coral reef which inclosed the lagoon surrounding the little atoll.

It was daylight now, and straight ahead could be distinguished the gap in the reef through which the boatswain was making to steer the *Pearl*. The aperture was

very narrow, and it needed all the old man's skill to avoid mishap.

But it was deftly done, and with a mighty wash and spray-cloud of white-capped water, and with an arrow-like speed, the barque, quivering for just a second on the top of a gigantic wave, shot through the gap to bring up safely in the calm, clear lake inside.

Events marched rapidly now.

Lowering with the aid of Chips and one or two of the "hands" the starboard-quarter boat, the boatswain first letting Ultima down into it, followed quickly himself, leaving Chips in command of the ship. It was but a little distance to the sandy beach of the atoll.

At first they could detect no sign of life, then (it was Ultima first) they saw distinctly a strange, weird figure sitting, head bowed upon his hands, upon a blackened tree stump close to the water's edge.

"Leo!—Leo!" she cried, and the figure looked up.

"Quick! Peter! quick!" and the old man nerved by her excitement, bent to the heavy oars with the energy and strength of youth.

As the boat grounded in the soft, wet sand, Ultima with a little cry sprang out and ran, her hair streaming behind her in the early morning wind, toward the tree stump.

His hair and beard were long and streaked with grey; his eyes sunken and dark rimmed; his clothes, such as they were, ragged and dirty, and yet there was for her no doubt.

He did not rise at her approach, but sat on, looking up at her in a dazed way; and then she pillowed his poor head upon her bosom, and crooned over him, as doth a mother over the child of her love.

* * * * *

There is little more to tell.

How, gently persuaded, he entered the boat, and was taken on board the *Pearl*; how, recovered from his "dose," the mate was induced to let "by-gones be by-gones," and to sail the ship to the nearest British Port; how Captain David Lobb paid eventually the full penalty for "marooning" his "first-officer," all this may well be imagined.

That Peter, the old boatswain was not forgotten may also readily be believed; and to-day as he dandles Ultima's youngest son upon his knee he tells over again to the fine little chap of six at his side the story of the finding of his father by the wit and devotion of his father's wife.

RALPH ENDERBY.

.....

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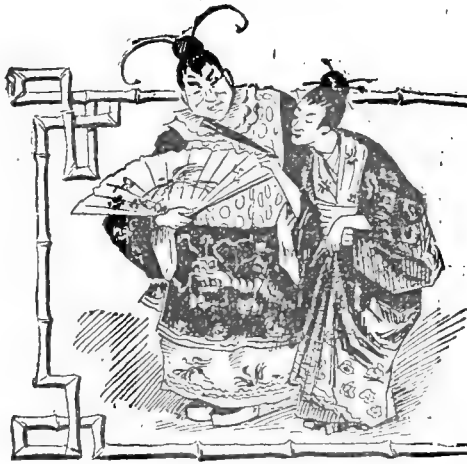
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Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XXIX.—THINGS WERE ALL WRONG, BUT
HE RIGHTED THEM.

WHEN Mr. Bowser reached home the other evening, dinner was ten minutes late.

This was such an unprecedented thing that he looked at Mrs. Bowser for an explanation, and she proceeded to say:

"You see, the butcher was a little late in sending the steak, but it may not happen again for years."

"Late, was he?" growled Mr. Bowser as the blood flew to his face. "What time did you order that steak?"

"At three o'clock."

"And, having three hours in which to execute your order, the butcher was ten minutes late! This is a matter to be inquired into. If that butcher thinks he can play fast and loose with me, I'll show him that he's greatly mistaken. He was probably off at a football match or a horse race, and he didn't care whether his customers had dinner or not."

"I don't think it will happen again," said Mrs. Bowser in a voice calculated to soothe, and just then dinner was announced.

During the meal she sought to divert Mr. Bowser's mind from the butcher's slip, but the more he thought of it the wilder he got.

It was also unfortunate that the baker's boy had been late with the bread and that they had to economise with the butter because the dairyman hadn't got round.

"In other words," said Mr. Bowser as he rose up before his dinner was half finished, "you let these people run your house instead of running it yourself. Do you suppose they would dare dilly-dally round if I gave them an order? What they need is waking up, and I'll go out and wake them!"

She followed him to the hat-stand and suggested that he let her make a complaint on the morrow, but he clapped on his hat with a bang and replied:

"I'll do nothing of the kind. I want them to understand who they are dealing with. Because you are a woman who'll put up with anything and everything it doesn't follow that folks can sit on my coat tails. You listen for a row."

The cat had followed them and he humped his back and gurgled at the thought of the fun ahead. Mr. Bowser had only to go along one street to find the butcher. He was received with a smile, but the smile faded as he shouted:

"And so my dinner must wait an hour and a half because you didn't get home from the races? Do you think I will stand such tomfoolery as this?"

"My delivery boy fell and broke his arm, and I had to deliver the orders myself," explained the butcher. "I was about ten minutes late at your house, but under the circumstances I hope you will overlook it."

"I'll overlook nothing! I want my house run on a system. If you can't run your shop on a system and a better system than this you'd better get out."

Then the butcher lost his temper and said he knew his business and all about systems, and Mr. Bowser got wild and said he doubted it, and they had a war of words which so scared an old woman after twopenny worth of sheep's liver that she had a bad attack of palpitation. Mr. Bowser was in good trim for the dairyman, and he went to him with eyes flashing and ears working and demanded:

"Are you in business to accommodate the public or yourself? A nice state of affairs that you should spoil my dinner for the want of butter!"



"You listen for a row."

"I'm awfully sorry," explained the dairyman, "but we had a fire in the back room which upset things and made us a little late to-day."

"But what has a fire in your back room to do with me? Did I cause that fire? Am I responsible because your dough-headed servant set fire to your place? You spoilt my dinner, and I want to know what you are going to do about it?"

"Can't you excuse such an accident as a fire?" asked the dairyman in surprise.

"No, sir; no, sir! It is your business to have a fire-proof building. Even with a fire raging, an ambitious dairyman would not have neglected his customers. I don't like it, sir, and you are a lymphatic man, sir, and if you can't promise to do better in future you'll get no more orders from me."

Then the dairyman called Mr. Bowser an old kicker, and in return Mr. Bowser made some unkind remarks, and in their excited movements they upset two cans of milk and made such a row that a policeman came in and said it was a burning shame.

The baker's face wore a smile of contempt, and he was softly humming to himself, when Mr. Bowser came in to him and thundered:

"If you don't know enough to run a bakery, why don't you sell out and try a coal yard?"

"But what is wrong?" asked the baker.

"My bread—for dinner! Did you have that bread at my house at half-past five o'clock?"

"I am sorry to say I didn't. I was seven or eight minutes late, but that was because a wheel came off my cart. I can't make out how it happened, but—"

"What are the wheels of your cart to me?" shouted Mr. Bowser as he banged on the counter. "Do I run your wheels? Do I run your old white horse and red-headed driver? Do I even know that you've got wheels to your cart? You were late, sir, and by being late you spoilt my dinner, and what are you going to do about it?"

"That's too bad, and I'm sure it won't happen again. How on earth that wheel—"

"That wheel be hanged, sir! When that wheel came off, you should have hurried yourself all the more. It is evident that you have no head on you."

Then the baker, who felt himself blameless, began to talk back and Mr. Bowser to use stronger language, and

they finally shook their fists under each other's nose and got a boy so excited that he ran out and called up the ambulance. Mr. Bowser reached home boiling over, but remembered that some shirts were to come up by seven o'clock. It was now after eight, and they hadn't arrived.

"They will never come," he roared as he banged open the door, "because I will go out and hunt that false shirtmaker to his doom."

"It is early yet, and they will be here by nine," pleaded Mrs. Bowser, as he gasped for breath and jumped up and down. If he heard her, he paid no attention, but rushed off down the steps and out of the gate. At the corner he met the shirtmaker, who had come to deliver the goods himself, but had stopped for a few minutes to chat with a friend. There was an instantaneous explosion, followed by a grapple, and the crowd which speedily gathered saw two men rolling over and over on the pavement and punching away at each other, while the three new shirts went flying hither and thither until somebody picked them up and sneaked off with them.

By-and-bye Mrs. Bowser and the cat looked out of the front door. Mr. Bowser had limped home and taken a seat on the steps. His hat was gone, his hair all ruffled, his coatsplit up the back, and he was looking into vacancy across the street.

The cat went down and rubbed against his back and purred to him, but he made no move. Mrs. Bowser quietly asked him if he had waked up the delinquents, but he never turned his head. He was thinking of systems and wondering why they did not pan out as he had told Mrs. Bowser they should. The shirtmaker had also got the best of their scrap, and the crowd had said they were glad of it.

M. QUAD.
[Next week: "He starts a Temperance Crusade, but gets all mixed up."]



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A Forfeited Honour.

PEOPLE always run away with a wrong idea when they see that Victoria Cross standing under its little glass case, in a prominent position in my drawing-room. They think that my father, Captain Langham, won it during the Indian Mutiny, but, as a matter of fact, the distinction was earned by a private for saving my father's life.

Yes, I think I'll keep it locked up in future, as I invariably have to enter into an explanation, and the story shows up a rather dark side in the life of the man who won it; yet it may serve some good purpose to tell it, as it may wake up our Government to do something for the heroes who have fought for the Empire. More is done now than formally, but there is still much to be done—and this is a story of years ago.

Private John Rushton was an agricultural labourer, who, finding the times rather hard owing to the fact that he had incurred the displeasure of the squire and the tenant farmers in consequence of his independence and the suspicion of being concerned in poaching, had enlisted and donned the Queen's uniform.

Rushton was a devil-may-care kind of fellow, thoroughly good hearted, but fond of fun, ready to take a part in any diversion, and quick to resent a slight or an injustice—one of those men who become moody and bitter when they feel that man or fate has not treated them fairly.

He was sent out to India and took an active part in the doings of the army of relief and punishment. It was during a fight outside Cawnpore that Rushton won his V.C.

My father had been wounded in a hot corner; the little party had to retire and my father was left on the field. He had done a good turn of some kind to Rushton, who showed his gratitude by returning, lifting my father on to his back—he was a strong man—and bringing him away under a heavy fire. It's the sort of thing that has been done many times since, but that does not detract from its heroism.

My father was invalided home and Rushton went through the campaign to the end, but almost in the last fight he was so badly wounded in the arm that he was disabled.

When Rushton returned to this country, my father obtained employment for him, but after a time it appears that Rushton found considerable difficulty in obtaining work. The "Captain"—as my father was usually styled—helped him into several situations, but a one-armed man, as Rushton was practically, found himself at a discount, and as soon as the firms decently could, so as not to appear discourteous to my father, they got rid of Rushton.

I think we must admit that the man contributed in

some measure to his own downfall by occasional lapses into intemperance, but I am inclined to think that these were brought on partly by the bitter feeling caused by his own ill-luck. There are very many people who, when luck seems to be against them, give way to drink or some other vice.

Then my father died and in the grief and trouble that followed, I lost sight of the man who had saved him from the Sepoys. It was many months afterwards before I recollected him and made inquiries, only to find that he had been convicted of theft and that his name had been struck off the V.C. list.

His sentence had expired before I became aware of the facts, so Rushton was an outcast, had lost his annuity and must get a living as best he could. I was sad at heart at this thought, but I could do nothing; he had vanished.

Time passed on and I married; my name was changed and there was no clue to the outside world that I was the daughter of Captain Langham.

I had some of my dear father's things in my house, and in gratitude to Private John Rushton I had cut from the *Gazette* the notice about the Victoria Cross having been conferred on Private John Rushton for saving the life of Captain Langham and had had it framed; it hung in my room and under it was the black edged card respecting my father's death.

At first, I used to look at the framed cutting every day and ask myself what had become of Jack Rushton; but one gets accustomed to everything and in course of time I had a good many other things to think about and only indulged in such reveries at long intervals. So seven years passed.

One night we had been out late, my husband and I, and it was quite midnight before we returned. I had told the servants not to sit up for us, so when we reached home we found the place in darkness, even the hall light having been turned out.

A letter which had arrived by the last post had engaged my husband's attention, so I left him downstairs and went straight to my bedroom.

The handle of my door always turned very easily and with scarcely any noise, so that the occupant of the room, whether a servant or myself, would scarcely detect the entrance of another person by sound.

I turned the handle and pushed the door back, thinking of what had passed during the evening, but I started in surprise as my eyes fell upon a gleam of light from the dressing-table. I knew by the position and by the kind of light that it came from a lantern.

Without thinking of possible consequences, I stepped into the room and demanded: "Who's there?"

Before I had time to utter another sound I felt my throat clutched in a tight grip and I was forced backwards in such a way as to shut the door.

"If you make another sound I'll choke you!"

The words came in a hoarse whisper and I knew that the threat would be carried out. There was no mistaking the determination of the burglar.

"Come and sit down in that chair," commanded the man, and as he drew me towards the seat by the hand which still held my throat, albeit more gently, I was bound to obey. "That's right! Mind what I told you or—"

He had by this time released his hold and now held a revolver in his hand—he held it within the radius of the light from the lantern, that there might be no doubt in my mind concerning what he would do if I gave the alarm.

I was in an agony of fear on my husband's account. If he came into the room, the man would probably shoot at him, and at such short range there would be very little chance that Richard would escape injury, at least.

"Now I want all your jewellery and any money you've got," said the burglar. "Make haste, now! I ain't got no time to waste and you've spoilt me for getting the plate. I was just trying to open the drawer, but now you've come in you can save me the trouble. Where is the key? Don't speak more'n a whisper!"

I took the key from my pocket, together with my purse, and began to slip off my bracelets and rings; I did it all in silence, for I was anxious to satisfy the man and get him away lest harm should come to my husband. I watched the house-breaker and the door alternately, and in spite of my pre-occupation my curiosity was aroused by the way the man went to work.

He did nothing with his left hand; the arm seemed to hang helplessly by his side except now and then when he made use of it much as I imagined a man would use a wooden arm. He had the drawer open and took from it some trinkets which he thrust into a pocket in his coat.

I fell to wondering how he would have carried away the plate, and I concluded that he was anticipating being able to walk out of the front door with it; he could not climb from my window with a heavy bundle, unless he swung it round his neck, and to drop it to the ground beneath would probably attract attention. Then I grew nervous again about my husband's safety, for I fancied I heard a noise on the stairs.

Having pocketed all he could find in the way of portable valuables, the house-breaker picked up his lantern and began to look about the room in search of something more. I noticed that he attached the lantern to a hook on the front of his coat, while he held his weapon in his available hand.

I watched him as he moved about the room; my heart was throbbing violently and I determined to make a dash for the door, or even to try and take him unawares.

I am a soldier's daughter and have inherited some of my father's courage, but up to the present I had had absolutely no chance against the intruder, and one must not forget that prudence is said to be the better part of valour.

Suddenly the light of the lantern shone upon the framed cutting from the *Gazette* and the card under it; the house-breaker stared at it for a few seconds and then turned to me with his revolver lowered, and said in a voice that sounded like a gasp:

"Dead! Dead! What do you know of Captain Langham?"

"I am his daughter," I replied.

Then, as the awful truth flashed upon me, I continued:

"And you are Jack Rushton!"

No sound came from the man. I stood up, struck a match and in a second I had the gas alight. All my fear was gone; I felt that the man would never attempt to harm me.

"I have tried to find you many times," I went on gently. "I was sorry—oh, so sorry!—to hear that you had been sent to prison and had forfeited the distinction which you had earned so nobly. I have always kept that framed cutting in my room out of gratitude to the man who saved my father's life at the risk of his own. I was grieved that the man should have fallen into evil ways, but I was still grateful to him."

Rushton, for it was he, sank slowly into a chair near him, laid down his revolver, covered his eyes with his hand and began to weep. As he told me afterwards, all the past came back to him and aroused the better part of the man; then there came to him the recollection that his name had been struck off the list of herces, and he sprang to his feet with a vehement exclamation that was clearly a cry of defence. Just at that moment my husband entered, but Rushton did not see him.

"I have gone to the bad, Miss Langham," he cried, addressing me by my maiden name, "but I did not take the first step myself, I swear it! What chance did a man like me, with a useless arm, have of fighting for his living, even if he did have £10 a year? Such as we are not wanted; we are left to starve by the country we've fought for! I was one of the lucky ones, with what I had got out of the V.C.—one of the lucky ones!"

"Your father—heaven bless him—helped me time after time, but a man with any go in him wants to be independent, wants to earn his own living. And when he died I tried to shift for myself. But fate was against me, and one day I got dead drunk, and when I came round I found I was in a police-station cell and charged with stealing money from a man who had had a drink with me, and getting drunk on it. There wasn't enough evidence to rob a dog of its liberty, but they convicted me and I went to prison for three months. I swear I didn't do it! And when I came out, I was soured and I gave way. I have been to prison since then, and I have deserved it! I had to steal, for everybody was against me. And now I've come to rob the daughter of the man who helped me!"

And once more, overcome by emotion, he sank into the chair and wept. My husband came up to me and we held a conversation in whispers; then we both went to Rushton and spoke kindly to him.

My husband took Jack Rushton into his employ, and we both kept him in view, seeing that he was comfortably lodged and looked after. We had hoped to make an effort to get him reinstated, but he declared that he did not wish to make the attempt; he preferred that he should be counted as one who was dead.

No, Rushton had never really parted with his V.C.; it had been in the keeping of a woman for whom he had entertained some affection and who had never parted with it. He found her out when he was settled in my husband's service; she was married, but the Cross had been handed by her to her mother, from whom Rushton received it.

When he died, about half-a-dozen years later, he asked me to take it. I have kept it where you see it, as a memento and as a lesson to everybody to be practically grateful to the soldiers who fight for our country.

GEORGE DAY.



PADDLING HIS OWN CANOE.

TAKEZAWA was the head of a large silk and rice house in Yeddo. His father had been head, his grandfather had been head, his great-grandfather had been head; in fact, the date when the first of the name affixed his seal to the documents of the house was lost in the midst of antiquity. So, when foreigners were first allowed a foothold on the soil of Japan, none were so jealous of their advance, none so ardent in their wishes to see the white barbarians ousted, as the members of the firm of Takezawa and Company.

But times changed. Up to the last Takezawa held out against the introductions of foreign innovations in the mode and manner of conducting the affairs of the firm; other houses might employ foreign steamboat companies as carriers for the produce from port to port, might import foreign goods, and even go so far as to allow the better paid of their clerks to dress themselves as they liked in foreign costume; but Takezawa and Company were patriotic Japanese merchants, and resolved to run on in the old groove of their ancestors.

But times still changed, and the great house, running on in its solid old-fashioned manner, found itself left in the lurch by younger and more enterprising firms. This would never do. So Takezawa consulted with his partners, patrons, clients, and friends, and after much wordy discussion, and much vehement opposition on the part of the old man, it was resolved to keep pace with the times, as much as possible, without absolutely overturning the old status of the house.

Well, Takezawa and Co. had still a very fair share of the export rice and silk business; but their slow, heavy-sterned junks were no match for the swift, foreign-built steamers employed by other firms; so with a tremendous wince, and not without a side thought at "Hara Kiri"—(the "Happy Despatch")—Takezawa consented to the sale of all his junks, and the purchase with the proceeds of a big foreign steamer.

The steamer was bought—a fine three-masted, double-funnelled boat, complete with every appliance, newly engined, and manned by European officers and leading seamen. From the dock at Yokoska, where she was lying, a preliminary trip was made; and so smoothly did everything work, and so easily did everything seem to act, under the guidance of the Europeans, that Takezawa considered his own mariners perfectly com-

petent to handle the vessel after an hour's experience on board.

So the Europeans were discharged with six months' salaries—about six times as much as they would have received at home—and Takezawa fixed a day when the ship should be rechristened, and should make her trial trip under Japanese management.

It was a beautiful day in autumn—the most glorious period of the year in Japan—when Takezawa and a distinguished company assembled on board the steamer, to give her a new name, and to send her forth finally as a Japanese steamer. The ship looked brave enough as she lay in the dock—ports newly painted, brass-work shining, yards squared, and half-buried in bunting. At the mizzen floated the empire flag of Japan—a red sun on a white ground—and as Takezawa gazed fore and aft, and his eyes rested on brightness, cleanliness, and order everywhere, he wondered to himself how he could have been such a fool as to stand out so long against the possession of such a treasure, merely on the grounds of its not being Japanese. A fair daughter of one of his partners dashed a cup of "sake" against the bows of the vessel, and the newly-named *Lightning Bird* dashed forward into the ocean. Her head was made straight for Yokohama (Takezawa had seen the Englishman at the wheel manipulate her in that course on her trial trip, so he knew she couldn't go wrong). And straight she went.

Everyone was delighted; sweetmeats and wine were served round, whilst on the quarter-deck a troupe of the best "Geishas" or singing-girls in Yeddo mingled their shrill voices and their guitar notes with the sound of the fresh morning breeze through the rigging.

The engines worked magnificently; coals were poured into the furnaces by the hundred-weight, so as to keep a good uniform thick cloud of smoke coming from the funnels—if the smoke lacked intensity for a minute. Takezawa, fearful that something was wrong, bellowed forth orders for more coal to be heaped on, so that in a quarter of an hour's time the *Lightning Bird* consumed as much fuel as would have served a P. and O. steamer for half-a-day.

On she went everybody pleased and smiling, everything taut and satisfactory. Straight a-head was Treaty Point—a bold bluff running out into sea. The *Lightning Bird* was bound for Yokohama—Yokohama lies well behind Treaty Point—but at the pace she was going it was very apparent that unless a sudden and rapid turn to starboard was made, she would run not into Yokohama, but into Treaty Point.

The singing and feasting proceeded merrily on deck, but Takezawa was undecided and uneasy on the bridge.

The helm was put hard-port, the brave vessel obeyed, and leapt on straight for the line of rocks at the foot of the point, over which the waves were breaking in cascades of foam. But the gods would not see a vessel, making her first run under Japanese auspices, maltreated and destroyed by Japanese waves and rocks; so just in time to save an ignominious run aground, the helm was put hard over, fresh fuel was piled on to the furnaces, and by barely half a ship's length the *Lightning Bird* shaved the point, and stood in straight for Yokohama Bay.

Takezawa breathed freely for the moment; but, as he saw ahead the crowd of European ships and native junks through which he would have to thread his way, he would have given a very large sum to have had a couple of Europeans at the wheel in the place of his own half-witted, scared mariners.

However, there was no help for it; the ship sped on, and the guests on board, many of whom were thorough rustics, were in raptures at the distant view of the white houses on the Yokohama *Bund*, at the big steamers and the graceful sailing vessels on all sides.

To avoid a chance of a collision, Takezawa managed to keep the steamer well outside; they nearly ran down a fishing junk or two, and all but sunk the lightship; still they had not as yet come to absolute grief.

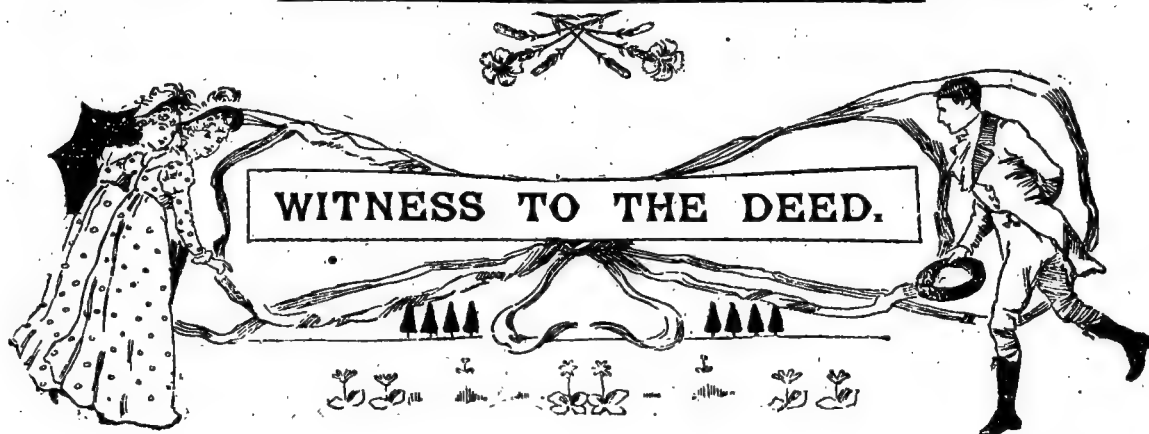
Round they went for a long half-hour; many of the guests were suffering from sickness, and Takezawa thought that he might bring the trip to an end. So he bellowed forth orders to stop the engines, and anchor. The anchor was promptly let go, but stopping the engines was another matter, for nobody on board knew how to do so—there was nothing to be done but to allow the vessel to pursue a circular course until steam was exhausted, and she could go no further. It was idle

to explain to the distinguished company that this was the course invariably adopted by Europeans, for under their noses was the graceful P. and O. steamer, a moment since ploughing along at full steam, now riding at anchor by her buoy.

So round and round went the *Lightning Bird*, to the amazement of the crews of the ships in harbour and of a large crowd gathered on the *Bund*; the brave company on board were now assured that the judgement of the gods was overtaking them for having ventured to sea in a foreign vessel, and poor Takezawa was half resolved to dispatch himself, and wholly resolved never to make such an experiment as this again.

He reviled the day when he was finally led to forsake the groove so honourably and profitably grubbed along by his fathers, and strode with hasty steps up and down the bridge, refusing to be comforted, and terrifying out of their few remaining wits the two poor fellows at the wheel. After a few circles, an English man-of-war sent a steam launch after the *Lightning Bird*, and to the intense disgust of the great Japanese people on board, who preferred to see eccentricity on the part of their countrymen, to interference by foreigners, but to the great delight of the women and rustics, who began to be rather tired of the fun, the engines were stopped. Takezawa did not hear the last of this for a long, long time; caricatures and verses were being constantly circulated bearing upon the fiasco, although it would have been as much as any man's life was worth to have taunted him openly with it. But it was a salutary lesson; and although he still kept the *Lightning Bird*, he engaged Europeans to man her, until his men proved themselves adepts, and she afterwards became one of the smartest and fastest craft on the coast.

FRANK ABELL.



My mistress in Gainsboro' road had lost a five-pound note in the house, and the thief was the parlour-maid. I knew it from her actions, and three months after I left the house she was caught in a similar offence and owned up to the first theft.

However, the crime was laid on me, and because I made indignant and perhaps impudent protest I was sent out of the house at half-an-hour's notice and refused a character.

I was without a situation for the next three months.

The first thing demanded when I applied for a place was a character.

As soon as it was found that I had none, it was useless to talk further.

It was for this reason that I finally paid a fee to a registry office in Margate Street, and was at length sent for to take a place at general housework.

It was an old man named Dyson who wanted me.

He was willing to take me without a character because he would have to pay less wages and because, as he

grimly asserted, there was nothing lying about loose in his house for one to steal. As we sat face to face I sized him up as mean and penurious, but I did not see any evil in him. He had an aged and infirm wife, he told me, and I would be the only servant.

It was not for me to pick and choose. I must have a place and keep it long enough to get a character again. I went with him miles and miles out on the Holborne road, and we at last arrived at the jerry-built and cheap-looking cottage he occupied.

It was a place devoid of almost all conveniences and had been selected for its cheap rent. I found the old wife deaf, almost blind and palsied, and it was apparent that no one bothered about her. She had become childish and petulant, and before I had been in the house half-an-hour Mr. Dyson whipped her with a strap for saying that she was hungry.

As he whipped her I saw him look at her in a way which gave me a chill. In the course of three or four days I made up my mind that he regarded her with detestation and abhorrence and was hourly hoping for her death.

I wondered that he had not pushed her downstairs or found other means to bring about an "accidental" death, but the old man was full of craft and cowardice. I soon had evidence that he was in love with a widow in the neighbourhood, or at least he desired to be free so that he could marry her. The man had no occupation and seldom left the house.

During my first two weeks in the place he never allowed me to see the wife except in his presence, and found fault if I cooked anything extra for her or expressed my sympathy. He had a way of whispering to himself, and a dozen times over I heard him say:

"I've waited for five years, but I won't wait much longer. I'll get rid of her and be happy."

My natural impulse on finding out how he felt towards his wife was to leave the house, but I have explained how I was situated. And, too, I soon got the feeling that I ought to stay to protect the poor old woman. I calculated that, while he might thirst for her death, he would not proceed to extremities while I was in the house.

It seemed as if he would have lived on alone, as he had done for the last two months, if he meditated anything of that sort. I didn't know the depth of his craft, however. He had brought me there to work her death through me. The first thing that raised my suspicion this way was one morning when he asked me to help her downstairs. The stairs were steep and shaky, and he had prised one of the steps loose, that it might slide from under our feet. As a matter of fact it did give way, but I caught myself and saved the woman. When old Dyson saw the failure of his plot, he looked chagrined and savage, and presently found an excuse for cuffing the poor wife's ears.

In the course of a couple of weeks he declared that the cellar was full of rats and gave me money and ordered me to buy arsenic. He recommended me to go to a shop miles away and to say that I wanted it for my complexion and to give my own name. I went to a chemist's only two streets away and gave his name, and when he discovered this he was highly indignant for a day, and I rather expected to be given the sack.

However, in the course of three or four days he

developed another plan. After telling the old wife what to say, he left me alone with her for the first time, and she begged me to get her some laudanum for toothache and not mention the matter to him. It was easy to tell that she had been told what to say, and I refused to buy the drug.

A few days later, as I was preparing her some soup, I had to leave the kitchen for a minute. When I returned, the soup was giving out a strange odour, and, being satisfied that the husband had poisoned it, I of course threw it away. He scolded about my waste, but when I looked him square in the eyes he dropped his and had no more to say.

I had been with the Dysons five weeks when the climax came. The old woman was holding her own, if not getting better, and the husband's impatience had a savage edge to it. Their bedroom was on the north side of the house. All along on that side was a deep excavation for a factory, and the cellar was full of stones and water. From the bedroom window the distance to the cellar bottom was about thirty feet. I slept on the west side, with two rooms and two doors between us, but so poorly built was the house that if voices were raised above a whisper they could be heard, and there were also many cracks and crevices to peer through. At ten o'clock one night I lay wondering if he really meant to take her life and how he would finally accomplish it when I heard a half-suppressed scream from his room. I got softly out of bed and went to the further door, and, looking through a crack, I saw that the window was up and that he stood before it with his wife in his arms. She was hanging on to him with fingers of steel, and making a great struggle. I heard him breathing heavily and snarling and growling as he tore her fingers loose, but I did not know what he meant to do till of a sudden he staggered to the open window and flung her out. She screamed as she went to her death, and in my fright I echoed the scream. I remember the man rushing across the room at me, his dashing open the door, his striking me down, and then came darkness which lasted for weeks. He struck me with a piece of iron and fractured my skull. He then carried my body downstairs and carried it a quarter of a mile away, and flung it into another excavation.

Before taking me from the house he put on my hat and cloak, and thus it appeared to those who found my unconscious body next morning that I had been coming home the night before and fallen into the pit. As to his wife, he gave the alarm and brought the police and made out that it was a case of suicide. While he was fast asleep, as he claimed, she had stolen to the window and leapt to her death.

His story was believed, and it was seven months before there was any contradiction. I had a fractured skull, brain fever and pneumonia and for weeks and weeks lay as one dead. When I mended, my memory was confused, and it was seven months before I told my story and put the police on the track.

Long before that Dyson had married the widow and sailed for America, and though efforts were made to find him, nothing came of them. Never did a man deserve the hangman's rope more, and yet, if living to-day, he is free and has no fear of the law.

C. B. LEWIS.

BY THE HEAD OF A MANDARIN.

In Three Parts.

BY SADI GRANT.

PART II.

LI KI FO was no inexperienced adventurer; he had shot bears in the Caucasus, speared salmon in Norway, and hunted wild boar in the plains of the Punjab; he was as hard as iron, and as callous as a graven image. Of fear he knew nothing, and merely regarded Death itself as an unpleasant but necessary evil. He had been *attaché* at two or three different capitals of Europe, and so was much more large-minded than most of his countrymen. He saw the other countries were more advanced in civilisation, but for all that he preferred his own—in no country of Europe could a nobleman be so completely a law to himself as in China, the high court-officers cared little for law and law's restrictions. In the Oastle of Amoy, Li Lang Hi was a king to all intents and purposes, and absolute master of the lives of the dependents on his vast estates. Save for one thing, the life of a Chinese Mandarin was delightfully unfettered. And that one thing was the Queen Empress. If she swooped down on any official, however high in rank, there was nothing to do but to submit. Many a rich and powerful nobleman had she reduced to poverty, and the Imperial Treasury calmly absorbed his estates; she took and restored yellow jackets as it pleased her, and snatched away peacocks' feathers with the most heartless unconcern. One or two stiffnecked Mandarins had been known to object to Her Majesty's all-embracing greed and tyranny, but they were immediately sent a long-bladed knife "with the compliments of the Emperor"—a hint to commit suicide they dared not disobey. If they had, it would have meant a degrading public execution. So the condemned nobleman called his friends together and before them all stabbed himself to death. Then his bones were kept with his ancestors, and no disgrace was attached to the family.

Members of the Chinese Embassies who were supposed to have attached themselves too much to foreign ways and customs had been known to receive the fatal gift. Li Ki Foo himself at one time seemed to have a chance of it. But, before deciding on his execution, the Queen Empress had him appointed to her personal service for a month, and, luckily for him, his stalwart form and splendid muscles found favour in her sight; also she thought that no one so perfectly wooden in demeanour, and with such extremely sloping eyes, could be anything but thoroughly Chinese. So Li Ki Foo passed the ordeal safely, and was permitted to still exist, but the near shave he had had to command suicide made him rather bitter in his thoughts about the Celestial lady. He pitied the young Emperor, and was a secret partisan of his; but the Emperor's friends must wait their time—it was hopeless to do anything in his favour while the Queen Empress held by bribes and rewards the greater part of the nobility on her side.

The old Mandarin had this afternoon toddled off to his head wife's apartments, to consult with her on the advisability of Li Ki Foo going to Tartary. She was the chief woman in the household since the death of the

Mandarin's mother. She was immensely fat, and had a round face like a full moon, in which her sloping eyes were nearly buried; but she was quite satisfied with her own appearance, and so was her husband—excessive fat is a beauty in China. She wore a jacket and trousers of pale blue satin, much embroidered.

In China women always dress like this, and the men often wear a straight, narrow petticoat, exactly the reverse of what men and women do in Europe. Her feet were simply stumps, nothing is so ugly as a Chinese lady's foot; in childhood the small bones of the foot are broken and the foot itself doubled up till it is simply a shapeless lump, and has no shape of a foot whatever. It slopes very slightly out from the ankle, and is nearly as broad as it is long. The very smallest push would upset a Chinese lady, for they have no surface worth speaking of to stand on at all. Li Lang Hi spent most of his afternoons with this head wife, and was guided much more by her judgment than he would have liked to admit. His favourite sofa was always ready for him, a most comfortable old pair of quilted yellow silk slippers stood waiting to be put on; he could lie and smoke in silence or talk as his wishes directed. A Chinese wife seldom contradicts her husband, or starts subjects of conversation he disapproves of. This afternoon Mi Cheng sat in her downy chair with a piece of elaborate embroidery in her hand, listening with deep interest to the tale of Li Ham's delinquencies.

"Tis indeed a large sum, O Li Lang Hi," she said at last. "Ten thousand taels for the deliverance of that idle and shallow-pated young man."

Li Lang Hi groaned again.

"Thou speakest but too truly, Mi Cheng, it is an entire fortune of which this robber would deprive me, yet what can I do? It is not meet that the bones of a son of a Mandarin so highly placed as myself should be lost to posterity."

"What says Li Ki Foo?" said Mi Cheng.

"He!" said the Mandarin, scornfully, "he seeks only to make it an occasion for a visit to Tartary, himself."

"And how so?" said Mi Cheng.

"Li Ki Foo purposes," said the old man, "to take himself the ransom to Kin Sin, to the agent of this robber Ku, and he pretends that if this mission is intrusted to him he can, by the wiles he learnt in Europe no doubt, so arrange that Li Ham may go free and yet the ransom be unpaid, or if paid, recovered from the agent."

"Ha!" said Mi Cheng, "in that idea there may be some grains of his father's wisdom."

Li Lang Hi had not looked at it in this light before.

"It seems to me," he said, "that in letting two sons go I risk two ransoms for two sons."

"Thy words are wise, O Mandarin," said Mi Cheng, "yet is 10,000 taels a large sum to pay away without any hope of recovery."

"Also Li Ki Foo is my eldest and best-loved son," said the Mandarin. "I like it not that he should imperil his life."

Now, Mi Cheng had also two sons, younger than Li Ki Foo; she bore no ill-will personally to the eldest son, but human nature provides that one's own sons are dearer than stepsons. Should the Tartar Chief dispatch both Li Ki Foo and Li Ham to a better land than China, who was Mi Cheng to grumble at the fate that made an eldest son of Feng Lo? But she must not say this, nor give a hint that such thoughts were in her mind. So she only said:

"Truly Li Ki Foo is a young man of great promise and the staff of thy manhood; O Li Lang Hi."

"What dost thou counsel?" said the old man; "thinkest thou this is a dangerous venture?"

"Who am I, O Li," said Mi Cheng humbly, "to seek to direct thy thoughts? I am but an ignorant woman, yet methinks I have heard that there is a garrison of many Chinese soldiers at Leh, on the Great Wall, and also some troops at Kin Sin itself."

"What meanest thou by that?" said the Mandarin.

"But this, O Li Lang Hi—where soldiers are, there cannot be so much danger for thy son, Li Ki Foo, to venture. He can command an escort from the Chief Commandant."

"That is true," said the Mandarin thoughtfully.

"Yet do I not counsel this journey, O Mandarin," said Mi Cheng, "far be it from me to propose that danger should approach the most excellent and noble Li Ki Foo. Yet is ten thousand taels a large sum of money."

Then she embroidered in silence while Li Lang Hi weighed chances and possibilities in his own mind, smoking his amber pipe. On the evening of the next day he sent for his son, and formally gave him permission to go to Tartary; also, he remitted him an order on his bankers at Pekin for fourteen thousand taels, of which four thousand were for the expenses of the journey.

"This sum of money," said his father, "I give into your charge. It is a large amount to draw at one time. Should you be able to deliver Li Ham without enriching the Tartar Chief, do so, and I promise you, O my son, it will not be forgotten in days to come. After my death the ten thousand taels will be found added to thy original fortune, over and above what I now purpose for thy share."

"I thank thee, O my father," said Li Ki Foo. "I trust thy treasury will not lose the money; it shall not if diplomacy of mine can compass its safety."

"When wilt thou go?" said the Mandarin.

"To-morrow at dawn," said Li Ki Foo. "I will now give orders to my servant, Ah Cheh, that he shall make things ready, and before the morning mist melts on the China Sea I shall be far from the Castle of Amoy."

"May peace and success go with thee, O my son," said the old Mandarin; "yet it is a journey I like not, as I have before said. That thy life should be risked for that ne'er-do-well, Li Ham, is contrary to the dictates of my heart; yet have I consented to thy going, O Li Ki Foo; have a care for thyself and rather let the ten thousand taels enrich the steppes of Tartary than that thy life should be lost."

So Li Ki Foo made his preparations, which, indeed, were mostly already completed by the invaluable Ah Cheh, and the next morning, when the dawn sprang up in the far east, an armed escort was waiting outside the great gates of Amoy. Soon Li Ki Foo came out, clad in a neat riding costume of tan-coloured stuff, and with European riding boots to his knee. Ah Cheh followed him, dressed in much the same manner. The door

closed gently after them, and with no further farewells they mounted and rode away, across the rough, short grass of the plain, away from the high road along the coast, taking a short cut known to Ah Cheh, straight from Amoy to the great Wall of China.

The time of year was pleasant for a long expedition. In the morning a cold wind blew over the plains and swept the sand up in clouds, in the belts of forest land the same wind sighed in the pine branches and carpeted the ground with fallen needles. For four days Li Ki Foo and his escort rode, only stopping at wayside inns for rest and refreshment; on the fifth morning they saw the long line of the Great Wall in front of them and knew their journey was nearly over. The square towers and turned-up corners of the houses of Leh stood out against the morning sky. On the journey



Mi Cheng sat in her chair listening to the tale of Li Ham's delinquencies.

Li Ki Foo had told Ah Cheh the reason of his journey—now he called him to his side and said:

"The Agent of Ku, the Tartar, is not to meet me until we arrive at Kin Sin, yet it is likely there are spies of his watching, even at Leh; therefore, Ah Cheh, will I ride into the town with only one attendant. Do you take the other men and follow in two hours' time."

"May I not be the one attendant that remains at my lord's side?" said Ah Cheh.

"Nay," said Li Ki Foo; "I wish none to know that thou art my trusted counsellor, else spies would also be set on thee. To-night, after dark, find out my lodging, and I will arrange my plans with thee further, but only a man of the escort must accompany me on arrival. Also, O Ah Cheh, go thou to the Office of the Post and ask there for a packet for me sent by special messenger from Pekin. That bring to me at night."

Ah Cheh assented and fell back. His master called up one of the escort, remarkable for nothing but his height and strength, then with him he rode on alone to

the gates of Leh. There was a considerable garrison of soldiers there just then, as Li Ki Foo knew, and after dismounting and engaging a room at the principal inn, he sent a messenger to the Commander of the Barracks, a man he had met often before, asking him to come



They mounted and rode away.

down, and see him as soon as he could. Li Ki Foo's plan was this; he meant to engage a large force of soldiers and irregular fighting men, these were to follow him to Kin Sin and remain there under the command of Ah Cheh, unless he could induce the Commandant to take up the matter thoroughly and command the expedition himself. This, he was afraid, he could not do, for the Government was very chary of interfering with the Tartar Chiefs, and unless the Commandant received official orders from headquarters, it was very doubtful if he would dare to come to the front himself. It would be easy for him, however, in the slack state of discipline in the Chinese army, to send two or three hundred men under a stranger's command, while he pretended ignorance of their having gone. The Commandant came down to see Li Ki Foo in the evening and they discussed the matter fully over a tasty Chow-Chow stew, made of two of those charming little yellow dogs you sometimes see as pets in England. The Commandant took the greatest interest in the expedition.

"I deeply regret, my friend," he said, "that I cannot myself command it, but it is well known that the General of this Division is on good terms with the Tartars, and it is even said, receives protection money from Takal, a chief even greater than Ku. Had he done so from Ku, I could not have helped you at all, but as it

is, three hundred soldiers shall be at your orders or at the orders of Ah Cheh to-morrow. You will, I presume, give some reward?"

"They need have no fears on that score," said Li Ki Foo, "a thousand taels shall be divided among them if they accomplish my design."

"That design I do not yet know," said the Commandant.

"No," said Li Ki Foo laughing, "because, O most honourable one, it is yet unhatched in my brain. When I get to Kin Sin and have met the Tartar's agent, I must try some means to get to the place where my brother is lying a prisoner, then I can settle with Ah Cheh when he is to bring up the soldiers and make the attack."

"It is a risky undertaking," said the Commandant; "small chance is there of your escape should you be in the Tartar's power when the troops arrive."

"I can but die once," said Li Ki Foo carelessly.

Later in the evening Ah Cheh came in. He had put up the rest of the escort at a small hostelry quite the other side of the town, and though the men wondered they said nothing. Crooked and mysterious ways are too common in China to excite much notice.

Ah Cheh brought with him a small, carefully packed wooden case, and this he delivered into his master's hand.

"It arrived but yester even, my lord," said Ah Cheh.

"Tis well," said Li Ki Foo, taking it carefully from him, "it is an important item in my plan of campaign. Listen, O Ah Cheh, for I must confide to you all that I intend. From here I go to Kin Sin, with still only the one attendant, to meet the agent of the Tartar chief. I carry an order on the Bank of Leh for ten thousand taels; it will take the agent time to remove so large a sum, and till it is removed, they will, of course, keep Li Ham a close prisoner. My plan is this: I will send greeting to the Robber Chief and say, that being a great traveller in many lands, I desire also to see an encampment of a wandering tribe. Therefore I ask him, of his courtesy, to allow me to journey to his tents, to the place where my brother is confined, and there to stay till the ten thousand taels are in his possession."

"And my lord will so risk his precious life!" exclaimed Ah Cheh, in horror. "What possible chance can either thou, or thy honourable brother, Li Ham, have of escaping thy clutches? Do I surround the camp with armed men the chief will avenge himself at once by putting you both to death."

"In this box lies the magic that will preserve us alive, O Ah Cheh," said Li Ki Foo, "have no fear for us. Can I but gain an entrance to the camp where my brother lies a prisoner all will go well."

Ah Cheh looked suspiciously at the box; he knew that in Europe Li Ki Foo had studied chemistry, for he had often been much disgusted at finding the apartments occupied by him at Amoy and at Peking contaminated by the odour of gases and chemicals; no doubt, he thought, this box had something to do with chemicals, and his opinion of it did not rise on that account. However, he only committed himself to a contemptuous grunt as an expression of opinion.

"To-morrow," said his master, "I go to Kin Sin; you and the soldiers will follow in two days. When there you can have another interview with me, or, should I have left the place, you will find a letter, giving you full instructions, left by me at the inn where I shall have stayed. The most probable order will be that you should at once march out, with all the force you can command, and surround the Tartar encampment by

night, as silently and secretly as you can. Then, as soon as daylight dawns, attack it. Li Ham and I will take our chance of being alive when you have succeeded in taking it."

"And what of the money?" said Ah Cheh, "the ten thousand taels?"

"They will not yet have arrived at the Tartar's camp," said Li Ki Foo. "I shall tell the manager of the bank here to accept my written order for the money, which will be given him by the Tartar agent, but to delay paying it for a fortnight, giving as a reason that he cannot collect so large a sum in less time."

"The plan is well thought out," said Ah Cheh, "save only that the Tartar chief may kill both thou and Li Ham as soon as he sees both in his power."

"Of that we must take the risk," said Li Ki Foo. "I think myself that when Ku once sees the order for the money, and learns that it is accepted by the banker at Leh, his mind will be set at rest, and he will guard us but lightly and treat us as honoured guests. That is what I would do in his place."

"That may be so," said Ah Cheh, "but thou, my lord, art not a Tartar savage."

"Well," said Li Ki Foo impatiently, "he must treat us as he lists. The venture must be made. Do thy part, Ah Cheh, as well as thy work is always done, and if thou findest naught but corpses to carry back to Amoy, thy conscience is clear, thou hast warned me."

There was nothing further to be said, and Ah Cheh went away, not exactly sorrowing, but rather enraged at his master's obstinacy and ill-advised rashness. Still his orders were plain; so he collected all the men he could together, in addition to the three hundred soldiers from the fort and his own small troop. He managed to engage about eighty more desperate-looking ruffians, who fought for anyone who would pay them, and were especially useful in removing inconvenient relatives of wealthy families.

Many a respectable citizen, on his way home from a peaceful gambles with a friend, had been relieved of his winnings on the way at some dark street corner, and many a lovely but frail and frivolous maiden had had her cries quenched by them for ever in the dark waters of the swift Hoang-Ho.

They fought for money, but they loved fighting for fighting's sake up here in the North; they were not like their faint-hearted brethren of Corea and Formosa. Civilisation had scarcely crept so far as Leh; they lived, as their ancestors lived hundreds of years ago, by rapine and murder, by lawless fighting with the Tartar tribes.

Li Ki Foo could have asked for no better supporters than these brawny, brown sons of Anak, with hairy chests and mighty limbs.

Ah Cheh assembled all his troops together, and told them the reason of their mission was to deliver Li Ham, the son of a powerful Mandarin, from the power of Ku the Tartar. He told them his plan of surprising the Tartar camp in the early morning, and ended his speech by promising the (to them) huge sum of 1,000 taels, to be divided in case of victory, to say nothing of the loot of the Tartar camps. Grunts of satisfaction rose from all; this was truly a promising raid.

So, two days after his master had left Leh for Kin Sin, Ah Cheh and his followers took the same road, not all together, for fear of attracting attention, but by companies of tens and twenties. On arriving at Kin Sin, Ah Cheh hastened at once to the inn where Li Ki Foo had stopped, and was handed a letter left behind

for him. Li Ki Foo's prophecies had been fulfilled, the agent had met him and taken the order for the money, only the agent was no agent at all, but the Tartar chief himself, Ku, of the Lusan tribe. No one but himself could be trusted with such a delicate business. When Li Ki Foo had proceeded to express his desire to pay a visit to the tribe, he had been met with the greatest friendliness. True, Ku did not declare his name and rank in so dangerous a place, but he assured Li Ki Foo of Ku's goodwill and offered to be his guide to the camp.

"In that case who will receive the money from the Bank at Leh?" said Li Ki Foo sharply.

"That can wait," said the pretending agent magnificently. "Rather would my master wait for the money for ever than miss showing hospitality to so learned a traveller and so honourable a nobleman."

Also Ku was by no means indifferent to the fact that by getting Li Ki Foo into his camp he got security for another ransom.

"What fools are these travellers," said Ku to himself. "The shadow of the West has fallen on his brain. It is a deed worthy of a mad Englishman."

Still, he was by no means loth to profit by the mid-summer madness of a rich man's son. A doubt crossed his mind if Li Ki Foo were indeed so foolish as he seemed. He had watched his entry into Kin Sin with but one follower, still, more might be behind; it would be best to get him off to Tartary without delay.

"Lies the camp of the Lusan tribe far from here?" said Li Ki Foo.

"But three days' ride, honoured one," said the Chief;



"You will, I presume, give some reward?"

"straight to the rising sun, turning neither to the north or south."

"Good," said Li Ki Foo. "I will but go to my chamber and set together a few garments for the journey, then am I ready to set forth."

(To be concluded.)

SHORT STORIES ABOUT CAMELS.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 is. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Key of the Holy House," by Albert Lee, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. H. E. Luck, of 19 Cleveland Road, Chichester. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about TORTOISES, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, December 10th. Post-cards only, please.

Genuine Camel Hair.

MR. BOWSER has been on a visit to Egypt, and that is why nothing has been heard of him for a week or two.

It has now leaked out that while in the land of the Pharaohs he elected to have his portrait painted, seated on a camel, with the hoary Pyramids for a background, and he accordingly engaged an artist and hired a trusty Arab to attend with his camel.

The appointed hour arrived, and Mr. Bowser perched himself gingerly on the camel, and tried to look as much like an Arab sheik as his modern get-up would allow; but the result was not altogether happy.

The artist, however, got to work, but had scarcely made half-a-dozen strokes when the camel, giving vent to a terrible shriek, started off at a rapid, lumbering gait across the desert, with Mr. Bowser clinging round the animal's neck, and the Arab in hot pursuit.

When the ship of the desert dropped anchor at its home, some five miles or so away, Mr. Bowser had just breath enough to gasp:

"W-what's the matter with the brute?"

"Him full ob grief, sah," replied the Arab solemnly. "Him rec'nised his mother's hair in the painter-man's brush, sah!"

H. E. L.

The "Camels" are Coming.

AT a recent review, as the skirl of the bagpipes broke forth, a little girl, hearing some remarks by her elders, strained eagerly forward, and, without deigning to look at the kilted Highlanders as they swung past, kept her eyes fixed in the direction whence they advanced.

As the last soldier passed she burst into sobs.

Her mother eagerly and sympathetically inquired the cause of her grief, and the child answered:

"You said just now 'Oh, the camels are coming!'" and there wasn't one; not even a monkey went past us."

C. G. F. G.

Action and Re-action.

SOME time ago the Ordnance Select Committee assembled to test the feasibility of firing mountain-guns direct from a camel's back.

A gun was strapped to a cradle fastened to the camel's jack-saddle. The animal was led to the test ground, followed by a crowd of interested military experts.

The gun was loaded and sighted, and the camel stood

with its tail to the target. A slow match was then lighted.

As soon as the camel heard the hissing it turned round, and those behind had their interests intensified in the experiments by considerations affecting their own safety.

Some lay prone, and speedy but not dignified movements were the order of the day. When the bang came the camel went in one direction and the shot in another, proving that action and re-action are opposite and equal.

M. I.

Cruel.

A WOMAN who lived in the country went to London to see a circus. While the mid-day procession was in progress a camel was taking up the rear.

When it was passing by the woman, she observed the keeper hitting it with a stick. Running up to him she exclaimed:

"You cruel brute! Look at those two bruises you have already made on its back."

W. P. P.

Revenge!

A VALUABLE camel working in an old mill in South Africa was beaten by its driver. Seeing that the camel had treasured up the injury, and was waiting a favourable chance for revenge, he kept a strict watch upon the animal.

Time passed away. The camel, knowing that he was watched, was quiet and obedient, and the driver began to think that the beating was forgotten, when one night, after several months had gone by, the man was sleeping on a raised platform in the mill, and the camel was stabled in another corner.

Happening to awaken, the driver saw, by the bright moonlight, that when all was quiet the animal looked cautiously around, rose softly, and stealing towards a spot where a bundle of clothes and a berenouse thrown carelessly on the ground resembled a sleeping figure, cast itself with violence upon them, rolling with all its weight, and tearing them most viciously with its teeth.

Satisfied that its revenge was complete, the camel was returning to its corner, when the driver sat up and spoke.

At the sound of his voice, and realising the mistake it had made, the animal was so mortified at the failure and discovery of its scheme, that it dashed its head against the wall and died on the spot.

W. J. B.

What It Was!

THE little hamlet was roused out of its usual apathetic state by an event which had never happened before within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. A small travelling circus was passing through the village.

Bringing up the rear of the caravans was a miserable looking camel. The natives were much exercised in their minds as to what this strange creature could be.

In the absence of the minister (they could get nothing out of the showman), the only one who could enlighten them was the old dominie.

That dignitary was promptly fetched.

Peering through his spectacles at the camel, he remarked:

"There are but two creatures I have never seen—a scorpion and a crocodile. This animal must be either one or the other.

E. C. L.

Entangled.

A MENAGERIE camel, like a captive balloon, never gets far from its tether, and is subjected to so many indignities in its daily life that its kingly heart must oftentimes come nigh to breaking.

When Barnum's show was in Barnsley last year, one of the keepers noticed a collier viciously prodding a recumbent camel with a long stick.

"Steady on, there," he cried, as the pained animal struggled clumsily to its feet. "Let the poor beast alone, can't you? What harm is he doing you?"

The collier dropped his stick and assumed a bewildered expression.

"Guv'nor, hev all camels got four legs?" he asked tremulously.

"Of course, they have, you chump."

"Then Ah'm goin' artside to kick mesen. Ah wor thinkin' abart ostriches when Ah bet Bill 'Iggins they'd only two!"

R. A. H. G.

So He Lost the Case.

"I ONCE had a case," said a member of the Bar "against a man in the country, which was as clear as daylight in my favour, but, by the cunning of the lawyer, he had continued to avoid coming to trial for about two years.

"At last the case was called, late in the term and late one hot day, with the court and jury tired and impatient.

"I stated the facts, and produced the evidence, which was all on my side.

"The judge asked the counsel whether they wished to argue the case, stating that he hardly thought it necessary to submit it on so plain a matter.

"The lawyers agreed to submit it without argument. The jury went out, and immediately returned with a verdict for the defendant.

"As soon as the court adjourned I sought the foreman of the jury, and asked him how in the name of common sense they came to render such a verdict.

"Why, you see," said he, "we didn't think much of the lawyer against you, and it wasn't strange he had nothing to say; but we thought you one of the smartest lawyers in the country, and if you couldn't find something to say on your side it must be a pretty hard case if we had to go against you."

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH £1,000?

Supposing—only supposing, of course—that you came into possession of £1,000 sterling, what would you do with it? How would you begin?

Probably, if you have a banking account, you would first of all put the £1,000 into it, and then take a deep breath and look around you to see how you could best utilise it.

If you haven't got a banking account, you very soon would have one. Then, what would you do? Would you go into a bigger house, spend all the money, and live in luxury for a year?

Or would you live just as you are and invest the money and spend the interest, leaving the capital untouched?

Or would you go for a long holiday on the Continent? Or, if you propose to double the £1,000, how would you go to work?

Write your views on this point, and send them to the Editor of *Pearson's Weekly*, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., in an envelope marked "THOUSAND," to arrive not later than Tuesday, December 11th.

A Columbia Graphophone will be sent to the person from whom we receive what we consider to be the best and most sensible answer.

Well, What Do You Think of the "Twenty Teazer"?

.....

ISN'T IT A LITTLE RASCAL?

CAN YOU DO IT?

CAN YOUR FRIENDS DO IT?

It is One of the most Teazing Teazers that ever Teazed a Teazed Public.

.....

It is not much to look at. You would think there was nothing in it. You would think you could do it on your head in the dark. But you can't.

You sit down at a table after tea with the "Twenty Teazer" in front of you, and you say to your wife, "Now, just time me, and see how quickly I can do this alleged 'Teazer!'" And then you begin.

About two in the morning your wife comes down in her dressing-gown with a candle to find you grovelling on the ground with your coat off and your collar undone, hunting round for the fifth square block of wood which you are convinced must have been in the box.

But you are wrong; there are only four, and the "Teazer" can be unteazed.

One point, however, you should bear in mind, that it is not necessary for the numerals to be all facing the same way. Some of them may be upside down, others may be end on, just as you fancy.

THE PRICE IS SIXPENCE,

and you can get it from any newsagent or bookstall clerk.

You can try to do it in the train, or on the bus, at home, or up in a balloon, or anywhere except in your bath. Even there you can do it if you can keep the water steady.

The "Twenty Teazer" won't wash clothes; is not a tobacco or a carpet-sweeper; doesn't bark or bite or harm to borrow money from you. It simply consists of four harmless little squares of wood in a neat little oblong box.

66 MARKET JEMMY. 99

He put it down carefully. There was a suggestion of stealthiness in the action which puzzled me. It was a small neat volume bound in dark leather.

"A pound, sir?" he queried, making interrogation points of his eyes.

Whilst he busied himself over my order I was staring at the little duodecimo which lay half-hidden behind the scales.

There was a look about it which seemed to be familiar. In the roar of the Great City it awoke memories of the cloister, the chapel and the quad.

It lay upon its side, exposing to view a smooth brown surface which age had darkened, and use had polished, but giving no hint of its author, and suggesting no word of its contents.

He handed me the fruit, and I tendered him a coin. In searching for change, the volume got pushed forward beyond the point where, covered by the scales, it had lain in partial concealment; and on the two inches of bevelled back now revealed, I read the legend in gilt letters, QUINTUS HORATIO FLACCUS.

I looked hard at the man who was counting pence into my extended palm—I looked and was disappointed.

In his face I saw nothing that would differentiate him from his brethren—from the mass of the great brotherhood who make their living in the street.

"Surely," thought I, "a barrowman who can read Horace in the original ought to carry some sign thereof on his forehead."

My friend did nothing of the kind.

"Clean but commonplace," was the mental comment I passed upon his features, "Eyes, dull and watery, lips loose; nostrils wide and spreading, cheeks flabby."

Outwardly the man was a disappointment.

"Thanks!" he ejaculated, as the last penny fell into my hand and closed the transaction in cherries.

I glanced at the book on the barrow.

"Horace?" I murmured curiously, looking at the man with grave and serious eyes, "Horace?" He smiled, and, for a moment I caught a glimpse of another personality.

The man who had been crying "cherries! all ripe, foppence a paound," was not the man who was standing there smiling at me. My curiosity increased mightily.

"We're old friends," he volunteered. "But I don't desire to advertise it."

He picked up the book and slipped it into his pocket.

A policeman came along—the barrow was "loitering"—the officer sauntered up. Our colloquy was broken off just as it promised to become interesting. The man had a story to tell. I turned away unsatisfied.

* * * * *

A week had elapsed before I met "Horace" again. When I pulled up and requested "a pound," his features betrayed no intelligence, and in vain I looked for the little brown volume which had provoked my curiosity.

The preliminary "bit o' business" concluded, I reminded him that we had "traded" before.

"Yes," he said. "I remember you now."

My glance had been wandering over basket and board. He noticed it and added, "I had a friend with me, I think, on that occasion."

"You had," I replied in a voice and with a smile that was intended to invite confidence, "a mutual friend."

"So I reckoned," he laughed.

"Well, I'm thinking you won't see us in company again, Mister."

"Indeed!"

"No." He shook his head emphatically. "It was a mighty piece of folly to bring him to the city. Yet, believe me, I wasn't aware of his presence till I found him hiding in the pocket of my jacket. I ought to have let him stay there. But I've learnt my lesson—"

"Cherries, marm!" he broke off, as a lady stopped in front of the barrow, and I pondered over the traces of culture which had mostly marked his utterance.

"Yes," he resumed, when his customer had taken her departure, "I'm a street-hawker by'r leave, sir—a man in the gutter. And, what business pray has a 'coster' to be seen thumbing his Horace? What do you think?" and he looked up in my face with a smile that was curious and suggestive.

"I think I understand you," I said. We walked up Moorgate Street, our talk growing more confidential. At the corner of Finsbury Square he stopped. "I turn back here," he said, "and go down on the other side. I'm working the Moorfields beat to-day. Meet me to-morrow—eight p.m. You know where. Ask for 'Market Jemmy.'"

* * * * *

It was at a coffee-tavern near Farringdon Street that my fruit merchant told me the story which I have set down below.

"Yes," said he, settling himself in a quiet corner, and producing an aged-looking briar. "Yes, my friend, you guessed right. I was a Public School boy, and am a 'Varsity man. I took a double-first at Oxford; and am entitled to write M.A. at the end of my name. What that name is, is of no consequence to-day. It's long since I answered to it. But in common justice to you, sitting here 'hob and nob' with a man picked off the street, I will say at once that I've never been 'wanted.' No, friend, drink has been my curse. Cards have been my ruin."

"Ten years ago I locked away the memories that lie behind eighty three, and vowed never to open the chamber containing them again. That life has been lived, has ended, and may now be forgotten."

"Of the past, therefore, you must be content to know only, that the depth of my fall may be measured by the fact that while still under thirty, I was first assistant-master at a leading grammar school in a northern county; yet before I had reached thirty-five, I had become an outcast, and a wanderer, and three years later was selling fruit from a barrow."

"Would it surprise you very much to hear that that was really the first step in the process of 'unwinding the accursed chain?'"

"I was living at a lodging-house in the Borough. On the same floor lodged a young woman whose husband had deserted her. She worked at a pickle factory. But her health was bad and she could never make full time. Her door was opposite mine. She had one child—a girl,

a pretty little flaxen-haired thing of three. The mother was a quiet, well-behaved woman whose lines had fallen in the roughest places. At times her face wore a look of anguish which distressed me to see. But she never complained. The complaints of the poor are seldom heeded. Even the children learn to suffer in silence.

"During the winter I got into the habit of knocking at Mrs. Martin's door to inquire if I could bring in anything for her.

"The little maid always ran to climb on my knee or play bo-peep with the skirts of my coat. I still drank when in funds, but was not often the worse for liquor. You see, I could carry a cargo in those days that would have 'laid out' many another man. My neighbour, I don't think, had ever seen me properly drunk.

"I always avoided her when the fit was on. Her husband had ill-used her in drink, and she would tremble like a leaf at the sound of a drunken step upon the stairs.

"One evening, after a day spent in bed to sleep off a carouse—I'd been doing a bit of penny-a-lining at odd times, you must know, for a popular journal out Fleet Street way; but had got the 'bullet' the week before, and was 'keeping it up.' My report of a certain function which I was supposed to have attended was found to contain but one half-pennyworth of fact to a most intolerable deal of imagination. Not to put too fine a point on it, I'd been on the 'bend' and vamped up a report. It was the second time of offending; and, very properly, my name was removed from the contributor's list.

"Well, one evening at the end of this drunken week, I knocked as usual at Mrs. Martin's door, and, turning the handle softly, went in.

"The fire was just a glimmer in the grate, and the room was in semi-darkness. On the floor, the child was playing with some reels.

"'Mammy seep!' she lisped, getting on her feet and running towards me. But stopping half-way, she eyed me curiously, and muttering 'Bad man you's dwunk!' went back to her play. It was the severest rebuke I ever received. An infantile voice, four simple words, and the turning upon me of a childish figure, had cut me to the quick.

"'Can I get anything for you, Mrs. Martin?' I whispered huskily, eager to escape from the room.

"There was no response, and I drew nearer to the bed. 'Aren't you well?' I said, bending over it.

"The sight I saw sobered me in an instant.

"'Mammy seep,' murmured the child, pulling at my coat.

"The woman had lain down in the afternoon to snatch a little rest. Her cough, always troublesome at night, seldom allowed her to get even an hour of unbroken slumber; and often, after spending the morning at the pickle factory she would return home exhausted, and, throwing herself on the bed, fall asleep from sheer weariness.

"She had evidently done so on this occasion. But a blood-vessel on the lungs had given way—praps during a fit of coughing, praps in an attempt to change her position—and she had been suffocated; probably before she knew what had happened.

"Well, my friend," continued 'Market Jemmy,' after a few slow and solemn puffs at his pipe, "that is now seven years ago, and not a drop of liquor have I tasted since.

"The child—little Milly—was my salvation. Nobody in the house knew anything of the mother. In London tenement-houses, the inmates, often enough, are a mys-

tery to each other. They come and go, passing each other daily on the same staircase, each mounted by their own familiars, and each bearing their own burden. Very seldom are they curious to probe the secret of each other's lives. The struggle for existence consumes all their energies. The present hour claims all their attention. Only when death steps in is the current turned backward, and guesses hazarded concerning the antecedents of the individual who has 'gone over.'

"Mrs. Martin had been living on my landing for eighteen months but beyond the fact that she had come from Devonshire—poor soul! from the fern-clad combs of leafy Devon to the squalid streets of sordid Southwark—and that her husband had left her; beyond this, nothing whatever was known about her. Plenty of hands, however, were held out to take charge of little Milly.

"Many of them, prompted only by the sweet charity which the poor show to the poor—a few, actuated by motives which, to say the least, were open to suspicion. But she clung to me, and I claimed her; and verily, I believe I should have gone right under in double quick time had another taken her and not I.

"A month later I started out with the barrow to work for her—for her I am living—for her I am saving—for her sake I abstain.

"Live with me?—with 'Market Jemmy.' Heaven forbid! No, friend, Milly's at school. The girl shall have her chance, as I had mine. Heaven send, she make a better use of it.

"After much searching I discovered a thoroughly good middle-class establishment kept by a widow and daughter in a small town twenty miles from London. I interested them in the girl, and they agreed to take her as a boarder. On the first Sunday in every month I pay her a visit. She calls me 'uncle.' Last week she wrote to remind me that she would be 'eleven' before she saw me again. No," he said, replying to a question; and I fancied I could detect a shade of bitterness in the tone, "I have no ambitions for her. The future lies on the knees of the gods."

He rose from his seat and reached for his hat.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth," he said abruptly, "and no man knoweth—the course that a woman will take, or how far she will go.

"Milly has the promise of beauty," he added quietly, proceeding to refill the aged briar from an ancient pouch; murmuring slowly, as he pressed the tobacco into the bowl with his thumb:

"No, I have no illusions. 'The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees is left this vault to brag of.'"

We parted at the door; and I walked home under the starry mantle of the night, silent and wondering.

H. HUNTER.

OUR NEXT GREAT SERIAL

WILL BE BY LOUIS TRACY,

AND WILL BE ENTITLED

"THE LOST LADY DELIA."

It starts in the CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER of *SHORT STORIES*, and is of intense human interest.

It is written in a crisp and sparkling manner, and is calculated to hold the attention of the reader from the first to the last chapter.



"I'm very sorry, sir, but I'm a poor woman, and depend upon my lodgers for my living. I can't afford to let the bill run on any longer. You must either settle it to-morrow, or find other rooms."

The two, to whom the lodging house-keeper spoke, exchanged glances, in which there was mingled a world of despair.

The woman observed, and her somewhat unsympathetic face unbent a little.

"I don't want to be hard on you," she added. "As nice a lady or gentleman I never had in my house, so I'll give you another week. Perhaps by that time you will have written to your friends." And leaving her bill upon the table, the landlady left the room.

It was a common case enough.

A young and pretty actress—not too clever in her profession—and with a strong spice of romance in her little Bohemian soul, while playing in a small provincial theatre, had attracted the attention of a good-looking young fellow, occupying the stalls.

By the friendly assistance of a male member of her company, he had secured an introduction; and an acquaintance commenced on both sides with no more meaning than a passing flirtation—had ripened, in the short space of the company's stay, into a deeper sentiment.

Having money and leisure at his command, in spite of her protestations, he had followed the troupe from town to town.

Then one morning, yielding at last to his persuasions, she had accompanied him to church, where they were quietly married.

For a little time, life to the newly-wedded pair had been a dream of happiness, though like all dreams it sometimes had its waking moments, when, with his quarter's allowance running low, the necessity was drawing near of communicating the news of his marriage to his uncle—the stern old Berkshire squire, who had expected such brilliant things of his nephew and heir,

and who—for some strange reason—for the old man was broad-minded enough in most matters—had an abiding hatred of the theatre.

Hugh Dalrymple dreaded the ordeal before him. He realised how much wiser his wife had been than he, when she had besought him, tearfully it is true, but with all the strength of her unselfish nature, to wait a while.

He recalled the mystery—which, head over ears in love as he was, had then seemed of such little moment—attending his wife's birth.

Her father had been an actor, who had died when she was too young to recollect. His professional name had been Horace Lanceley, but more than that she did not know. She remembered her mother well—a gentle-voiced, dainty little woman, with turquoise blue eyes and fair hair, and with cheeks which should have been all smiles and dimples—in fact another such as herself. But for some unknown reason, her mother's eyes had always worn a saddened expression, and her cheeks had been pale and careworn.

Katie's childhood had been made up for years in travelling about the country with her mother—Kathleen Lanceley, as she called herself—playing tiny parts in the various companies in which her mother was the leading actress.

She recalled vividly when all this came to an end, and her mother, who had suddenly received an advantageous offer to tour in America, had left her, after a sad, sad parting, in the charge of a kindly landlady, whilst she went, as she said tearfully, to earn the means to secure her little one's future.

Katie possessed piles of letters, bearing the post-marks of nearly all the big American cities, full of loving messages and letters which, as time went on, spoke hopefully of that day not far distant, when her mother would be able to return, and together they would leave the stage, and be as happy as the day was long.

She had still another letter—black-edged, and written in a stiff, legal hand, from a lawyer in Massachusetts, stating in curt, legal terms, the death of his client—Kathleen Lanceley—from typhoid fever, inclosing a lock of sunny hair, a photograph of her mother when a girl, and a cheque which represented the dead actress's savings, and which served to start Katie in the profession.

A pathetic little life-story enough, but not one, as Hugh knew, to appeal to Major Dalrymple, so ambitious as he

was, for his favourite nephew to form a great alliance.

When the dreaded interview had taken place when their worst fears had been realised—and Hugh, proud and passionate as the fiery old despot, his uncle, had

had descended to those mysterious apartments, somewhere in the basement where she lived and slept, the two remained silent.

She was the first to break the silence, and with the sanguine trust in the morrow to redeem the misfortunes of to-day, which is so characteristic of her profession, she hoped still that "something" might turn up. Besides if all else failed—as she told herself—with a little sob rising in her throat, there was always the plan, which more than once in their darkest hours had come to her, which would go far to set matters right—for Hugh.

"Never mind, dear," she said, putting her soft arms round his neck, "it is very terrible, I know, especially for you"—she only thought of him—"but we have another week to look about us, and by that time we may be able to pay the woman."

"We may!" he reiterated. Then with bitter sarcasm:

"And I may be offered the editorial chair of one of the journals, in place of the gentleman who, shows such appreciation of my work. The chances are about as probable. But what a brute I am," as he caught sight of the tears welling up into her eyes, "talking like this to you, little woman, instead of trying to comfort you, but somehow," she nestled into his arms and laid her pretty head upon his shoulder, "I can't, and that's a fact! Everything looks so black, and I know no other way of earning money, unless," seriously, "I could get someone to give me a post as a gamekeeper. I can use a gun."

"No, no, dear," she replied. "We've not come down to that yet. Fancy my proud Hugh," with a hysterical little laugh, "following someone about, whom he'd know as an equal, loading their guns, and carrying their game-bags. Why he would eat his heart out in a week."

"Why should I? What right has a miserable creature like I, to have any pride?"—with a return to the old bitterness—"My pride has allowed me to live on your poor little earnings for six weeks at the least."

"You forget, Hugh, that I am your wife," she said softly.

"I wish to Heaven I could!"

"Hugh!"—there was acute pain in her tones.

"Don't make a mistake, dearie"—drawing her close to him—"I only mean that I wish I could forget that I had linked your life with mine—had brought you to this," with a sweeping gesture around at the mean little room.

"It is you who have made the sacrifice, not I, Hugh!" she said. "My life wasn't a very easy one before we met. Besides"—with a deep flush—"since we have known each other, I have been very, very happy, happier than I ever dreamt, a girl could be, and to have been happy is something in this hard world, something"—with a sob she could check no longer—"to look back upon, when the happiness has passed away."

"What do you mean by that, Kit?" he asked, taking alarm by the sadness of her tones. "Are you—no!" staring hard at her, "surely not! You are not thinking that this grinding poverty that is, and may be, will make our love grow less?"

"No, Hugh, I have no fear of that, I believe," with a far-away look in her eyes—"we shall love each other always—always! But there!" hastily brushing away her tears. "I'm making a baby of myself, when I ought to be putting on a thinking cap, to discover some plan to help us out of our present difficulties, for by-



"I don't want to be hard on you," she added.

turned his back for ever, as he thought, upon the beautiful home which should have been his; it only seemed to draw the two closer together.

Hand in hand, as it were, they had thrown themselves into the great, battle-ground of London, filled with the beautiful self-confidence of youth that they could make a living for themselves—he with his pen, and she, with a small part at one of the London theatres.

But alas! "The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft aglee!"

Three months had gone by, the last of Hugh's allowance had long since been spent, and one by one his stories and articles over which he had spent hours of anxious thought, had come back. Thanks to her good looks, and previous experience in the country, Katie had, indeed, been fortunate enough to obtain an engagement as extra lady at a West End theatre, but the small salary barely sufficed to keep them in food. The rent for the past six weeks past had been unpaid, and now Mrs. Jarrocks had said that unless they could raise her rent, the coming week must be their last.

No wonder that for some minutes after the woman

and-bye things must brighten up. The darkest cloud, you know—finish the quotation for me, sir."

"I can't, for I don't believe in it. There's only one thing to be done, Kit," seizing pen and paper, "and that is, to sink the pride, and write round to some of my old friends, and ask for a keeper's lodge. I won't borrow money from them, but I'll accept work."

With a firm hand, she took the writing materials from him.

"Not to-night, Hugh," she said. "Wait a day or two longer," as he shook his head. "well, over to-morrow, then," and with the wifely tact, which seemed second nature to her, she soothed him into a more hopeful frame of mind, and at least for the present, the letters were forgotten.

He was still unsuspecting when, the following morning as she was starting for a rehearsal as he supposed, she returned twice after she had reached the door, and stooping down to where he sat over his writing, kissed him with a passionate fervour.

He never dreamt that the parting which he anticipated was to last only a few hours, it was her intention to be for all time.

The thinking cap, which had been worn often enough on her poor little aching head, during these last six weeks, had suggested only one plan. Everything she had learnt of the past, had convinced her that Hugh had been very dear to his uncle. She herself was the only serious obstacle to a reconciliation. She would go down to Streathfield, Major Dalrymple's country seat, near Wantage, and propose to the proud old man, that she should go away—bury herself once more in her old profession—and as far as lay in her power—set Hugh free.

To think was to act with Katie. All Hugh's and her own jewellery had gone, save one thing—her mother's miniature. This was encased in a gold locket, on the back of which was the monogram, K. D. in diamonds. The pawnbroker with whom she pledged it, advanced her sufficient for her fare, and a little more, and just at mid-day, when she pictured Hugh putting on his hat to come and meet her, she ascended the steps of the fine old mansion, which had been Hugh's home, and rang the bell.

Thomas—the old man-servant, who had been in the Major's service from a lad—appeared. She recognised him instantly, from Hugh's description, and the wrinkled kindly face seemed like that of an old friend.

"Is Major Dalrymple in?"

The old man started slightly, and a look of strange interest crept into his withered face.

"No! The master is out just now, miss."

"Oh!"

She had nerved herself for the ordeal of meeting him, now she would have given worlds to have had the dreaded interview over.

"But I expect him back very shortly. Would you care to wait?"

There was something in the old servant's expression which gave her courage, and she entered the house. He showed her into the library, then instead of leaving her, fumbled nervously at the door.

"What name shall I give the major, miss?" he asked.

"Mrs. Dalrymple!" she said quietly.

His face fell, although the look, with which he was regarding her, was not less kind.

"Are you Mrs. Hugh, then—the young master's wife?"

"Yes!" she answered, half-shyly.

He heaved a sigh.

"It's wonderful! Wonderful!"

"What is wonderful?" growing annoyed at the



With a firm hand she took the writing materials from him.

old man's gaze which never wandered from her face.

For answer he went to the window, and looked anxiously out at the wide expanse of gardens and meadow-land beyond, then with a mysterious air beckoned her to follow him.

Wonderingly she obeyed.

He led the way up a broad flight of stairs and threw open a door. Within was a bedroom, which had evidently belonged to one of her own sex, for there were traces of feminine occupation everywhere—from the dainty lace upon the pillows, to the knot of faded blue ribbon upon the dressing table. But upon all and everything was the dust of years. The room remained apparently in the same state as its former occupant had left it—as Katie decided, more years than she had known!

She turned to question her guide, but he was standing pointing to a picture hanging opposite to the window—a ray of sunshine which had stolen through the closed venetians, falling full upon it.

"Look!" he said, and his voice quavered as he spoke.

Katie glanced up, then gave a low cry of astonishment.

The picture, which was a full length portrait of a young girl, with pale golden hair, and eyes of the purest blue, might have been herself, saving that she wore a dress of dark material, while the figure in the picture was draped in white.

"Who is she?" she asked in awed tones.

"It is the portrait of my master's daughter—Miss

Kathleen. Now you will forgive an old man's seeming rudeness. When I saw you, it was as though I had seen a ghost."

"And this was her room?"

"Yes! Just as she left it more than five-and-twenty years ago. But you must never let out that you have been here. No one ever enters the room except the master, and he only when there is no soul to see."

"You are the very image of Miss Kathleen that was. For her sake he may soften towards you and Master Hugh. But"—with another sigh—" 'tis a pity you've been a play-actress, a sad pity!"

They had left the room, and reached the top of the stairs, when a harsh voice calling "Thomas!" reached them from below.

"Go back! It is the master!" the old man whispered hurriedly, growing pale, "He must not see you here! Quick!"

"Where shall I go?"

He hesitated for a moment then replied:

"Back into the young mistress's room. When it is safe for you to come out, I'll let you know, but stop there till I come." And he hurried away.

As Katie found herself once more in Kathleen Dalrymple's chamber and alone, after the first feeling of intense awe which had seized her, had passed, a sense of peace stole into her aching heart, and the eyes of the dead girl—for somehow Katie had the conviction that dead she was—seemed to smile down at her, and how like those eyes were her own!

A curious fancy seized her. Her glance had fallen upon a wardrobe, and with feverish impatience she threw it open, disclosing a pile of dresses hanging within, and one was the white robe of the portrait.

Reverently, like one handling a holy thing, she drew it on, the dust, as she did so, rising from its silken folds in a cloud.

Now indeed as she gazed at herself in the dimmed glass of a great mirror, she saw that the old servant had spoken the truth. The picture upon the wall and the reflection in the glass might have been the same person.

What did it mean? She turned to question her other self—to ask those pathetic eyes which looked down so benignly at her from the painted canvas, to explain the mystery.

But the question was never asked. She was no longer alone.

Before her stood the figure of a tall, very tall, old man, his eyes distended, and the white moustache which hid his grim mouth, quivering with emotion. As she faced him a hoarse cry broke from his lips.

"Kathleen! Kathleen!"

Her terror told her that it was Major Dalrymple, and a gasp of fear escaped her.

At the sound he advanced slowly towards her, then with a doubtful movement, placed a shaking hand upon her shoulder.

The trembling form beneath his touch reassured him, and his face, which a moment before had been deathly white, became almost purple.

"Who are you," he cried fiercely, "and what mummery is this?"

But one word escaped her frightened lips.

"Kate!"

A puzzled, half-nervous look crept up into his eyes.

"Kate! What Kate?"

"Kate Dalrymple! Hugh—your nephew's wife!"

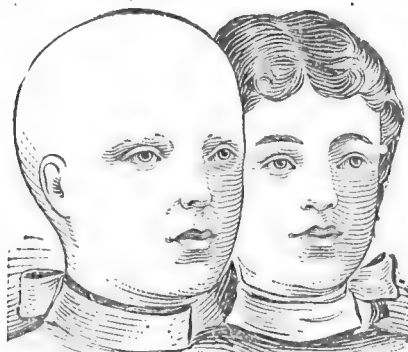
"What?" passionately.

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Remember a letter to us from British Isles requires 2d. postage. Write your name and address very plain, or, better still, enclose a self-addressed envelope, so there can be no mistake in delivery.

"Oh, please, please forgive me!" holding out her hands appealingly. "I only came to ask you to pardon him and to say," with a sob, "that if you will, he shall never see me again."

He was unmoved by her tears.

"How did you obtain an entrance here? And what is the meaning of this?" touching the white robe she still wore.

She hesitated. To tell him the truth would be to betray another and yet—

"Answer me!" sternly.

She pointed to the portrait.

"I came to see her," she faltered. "She is so like me, and—and—then I found the dress and put it on. I didn't think there was any harm that anyone would ever know. Somehow I fancied it might have been my mother's."

He drew her to the window, bringing her face within the light of the sunbeam, and looked at her long and closely.

"Who was your mother?" he asked quickly, agitation in his tones, and seemingly forgetful that his former question was practically unanswered.

"She was an actress, and," waxing bold in the defence of the dead woman, who had toiled so bravely for her, "a good woman, and I am an actress too. But tell me," taking advantage of a subtle change in his manner, "why do you hate the profession so? Is—is it anything to do with her?" pointing to the picture.

"Yes!" he said slowly. "She left me to marry an actor, and I cast her off."

"That was hard, for they loved each other, and love you know, is stronger than ourselves. Ah, it is!" as he gave an impatient shrug of his shoulders, "for it has made me strong enough to give up Hugh."

Again his fierce eyes burnt upon her face, as though he were reading her very soul.

"Sit down," he said, "and tell me about your mother."

What was her maiden name?"

And there in the dim light of that neglected room: Katie told her story, speaking of her mother's death in America, and all she knew of the dead woman's past.

"And now," she concluded, "say that you forgive Hugh, and let me go."

For some moments he remained in silent thought. When he spoke again, his voice had become husky, his features had softened, and the fierce eyes were dimmed.

"Yes, go," he said, "and bring Hugh home!"

"Home?"

Her brain reeled. She dared not believe all that his words inferred.

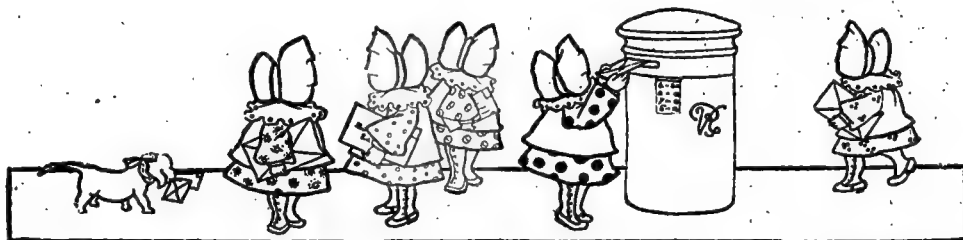
"Yes! To your mother's home, and yours! For more than twenty years I've mourned her loss, now," drawing up the blind and admitting a flood of glorious sunlight, which illumined every nook and cranny of the forsaken room, "I

shall mourn no more. Love is stronger than ourselves, as you say. I can believe it, for the guiding hand of love, which led you here, seems to have brought your mother back again."

HURBERT BARTLETT.



As she forced him a hoarse cry broke from his lips.



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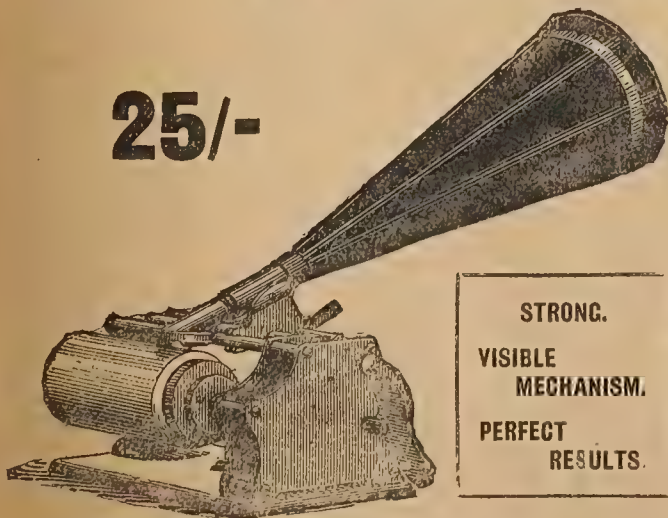
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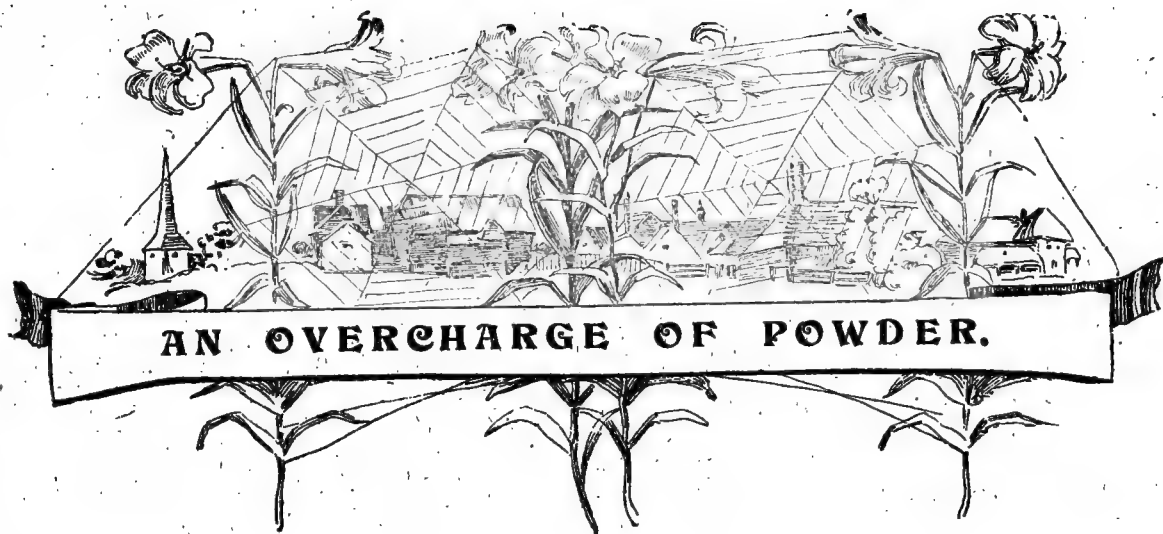
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"THAT lion skin is the largest I ever saw," said Bill.

"I dare say," said the Major.

"And the thinnest," added Bill.

"And the thinnest, likewise," said the Major. "And, in fact, as I heard you whispering to Bob, you hardly think it is a lion's skin at all. I am glad to find you are so observant, my boy, and sorry to say you are mistaken in this instance. The skin has some fishy features, but they will be accounted for when I have explained how I bagged the lion that used to wear it.

"This ill-fated beast pursued me when I was riding on a camel in the desert. He was evidently hard up for prey, for he chased us in the daytime and almost all the day, though once in the forenoon we had left him a mile behind, and quite out of sight.

"I discharged all my bullets at him without effect, owing to the unsteadiness of my camel, which was young, and to the visible trembling of the air as it rose from the over-heated sand.

"Night was approaching, and my beast was showing signs of giving in, and the tension on my nerves was growing too great to bear much longer. Something had to be done, and at once. I threw my stock of dried meat behind me; but the lion smelt it, and left it lying, without pausing a second to decide. From this I assumed that he was more thirsty than hungry; that he wanted blood—or water. This thought gave me my cue.

"Though I had hardly a gallon of water left, I instantly resolved to offer it to the lion. Gratitude for the kindness would possibly have made him give up the chase; but I thought it a little safer to stop him by chemistry than by moral suasion.

"I cut my last gourd into halves, scooped out and ate the contents, for I could not afford to waste what was both food and drink. Then I took a dozen seidlitz powders from my medicine-box, which I always carried with me. Still galloping ahead, I put the blue-covered powders into one half of the gourd and the white-covered powders into the other.

"Then I dismounted, being about a quarter of a mile in advance of the lion. I hastily made two small holes

in the sand, and placed in them the hallowed half gourds containing the powders, and filled both of these vegetable vessels with water.

"As I turned to mount, the camel suddenly dragged his halter through my hand and fled, panic-stricken. And little wonder either. The welcome sight of the water had quickened the lion's speed, and he was now approaching with terrific bounds. I followed the camel's example, I admit; but then, I did not run away half as fast as that craven brute.

"I looked round to see if the lion would drink, for my salvation depended upon that. To my delight he swallowed with two laps the water in the first vessel, which contained the blue-papered powders. In the vehemence of his thirst he did not stop to make a face, but bounded on to the other vessel, and drank its contents in one gulp.

"Then came a moment's terror. The king of beasts uttered a roar that ended in a portentous hybrid sound, blended of a steam whistle and the hissing of a fireman's hose.

"His eyes protruded; his tail was stiffly perpendicular; his form dilated till it became colossal; jets of steam issued from his eyes, his ears, and his nostrils. Then, with the sound of a thousand champagne corks popping at once the unhappy animal burst.

"A fizzing cataract that shot from his distended jaws propelled a loose tooth of his a distance of several hundred yards, which tooth happened to hit my runaway camel, and at once recalled him to a sense of duty, for he fancied I had sent a bullet after him.

"Had I had the elastic fancy of a classical poet, I should have sung how my lion was changed into a shower of rain. Or I should have called the story by the pretty name of 'Leo and the Fountain.' But I am not an Ovid, and did not think of it in time.

"Anyhow, I hope you know how that skin comes to be so spoiled and stretched. I brought it home as a curiosity, not an ornament; and in this point of view the things you noticed as defects are really its chief merits. Besides, there is a fine moral in that skin—it is the shabby coat of a dissipated lion who drank too much."

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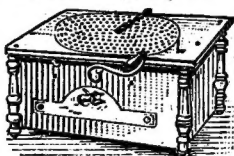
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Below will be found ten pictures; each picture representing the name of a well-known football player.

If you look at the picture in the margin you will see that the name is Maxwell. What are the other names?

If you cannot find all the names, ask your friends to help you.

All you have to do is to write underneath each picture, in the space provided, the name of the player you believe the picture to represent. Then keep the list by you until THREE other lists have appeared. We will tell you when to send them in.

You may send in as many separate attempts as you like when the time comes; but each set of four lists must be sent in separate envelopes, and will be considered as different attempts.

Only one solution is allowed under each picture.

Where two men bear the same surname, but different christian names, the christian name or initial is indicated in the picture.

The prizes will be paid to the competitors from whom we receive the correct, or most nearly correct, solutions.

No more than one prize will go to any competitor.

It must be taken as a condition of the competition that anybody competing therein agrees to abide by the Editor's final decision.

Example.



Maxwell.



No. 1.....



No. 2.....



No. 3.....



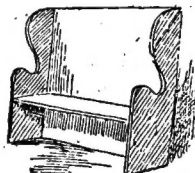
No. 4.....



No. 5.....



No. 6.....



No. 7.....



No. 8.....



No. 9.....



No. 10.....

I send in this coupon as a competitor for the prize advertised in this paper, and subject to the conditions printed on this page:

Name and address.....

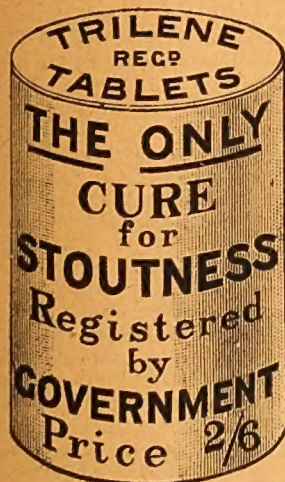
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3. All coupons are sent at senders' risk, and if they go astray, from whatever cause, we do not accept responsibility.
4. Competitors must attach their private address to their attempts. No prize will be sent to any post-office, refreshment rooms, or other places at which letters are called for. Attempts bearing such addresses will be disqualified.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

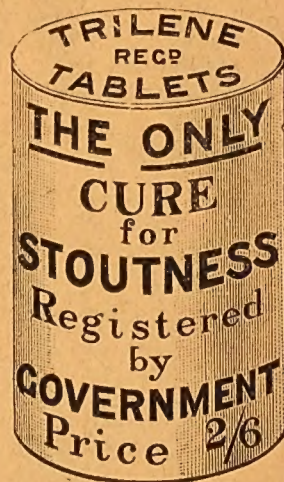
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66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.
Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscope Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

MISS CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.
Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 3lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me.
Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

MISS NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

Mrs. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigton, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 8st. 11lb."

Mr. McLEOD, 44, Caliside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

MR. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mrs. E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 30. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

COUNTESS FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

MISS A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

MISS A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

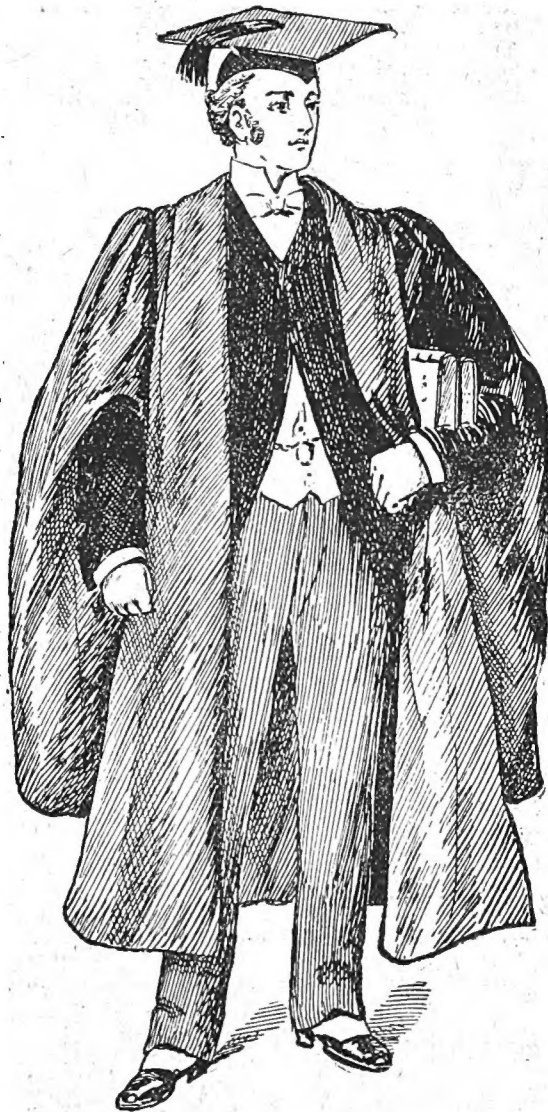
MISS F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

MISS PATIENT, of Woodberry, Theydon Bois, says: "Feel great benefit from Tablets. I have lost 2st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since. Send me a box for my mother."

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